



**LABOUR PROTEST
TURNS VIOLENT**
GAS BOMBS HURLED IN
ATHENS {page 8}

**NO WORK FOR
NICHOLSON**
UNLESS YOU COUNT
LAKERS GAMES {page 17}



HUSTLE & FLO
ALBUM SALES DON'T
FAZE FLO RIDA
SCENE {page 19}



OTTAWA

metro®

Thursday, December 16, 2010
www.metronews.ca



News worth sharing

Gatineau. Ski



► Skiers Michael Lapner and Greg Firth came out for the first day on the trails as the National Capital Commission launched its cross-country ski season in Gatineau Park yesterday.

MARC DESROSIERS/FOR METRO

Trails are ripe for the picking

With more than 250 kilometres of various trails winding through forests and along frozen lakes and river valleys, Gatineau Park boasts one of North America's most popular trail networks. Cross-country skiers currently have access to 56 kilometres of compacted and groomed trails including the Fortune Parkway, the Gatineau Parkway and the Champlain Parkway.

Give gifts that are a cinch

Get in the zone with only eight days 'til Christmas {page 33-42}

Transit driver to life saver

Awarded for rescuing 3 people in burning building {page 3}

Transit talk spurs strike fear

► Interim transit commission head touts 'respect' as means to smoothing contract talks ► OC Transpo riders flinch at thought of long commutes, parking, gas



SEAN MCKIBBIN
@METRONWS.CA

A repeat of the disastrous 2008-2009 transit strike can be avoided, said the new head of Ottawa's interim transit commission.

"It's about setting a new course, a new tone, said Coun. Diane Deans shortly after her appointment yesterday. "I understand morale is low."

Deans said she has experience working with unions and added her election campaign was endorsed by the Ottawa and District Labour Council.

"It starts with respect on both sides," she said when asked how she would tackle relations with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), Local 279.

ATU, Local 279 acting president Mike Aldrich said contract talks slated to begin today would not go ahead unless the city made changes to its negotiating team, CBC news reported earlier this week. Aldrich did not respond to requests for comment.

Lise Marquis, of Greely, said she only recently started riding OC Transpo.



"I think the will is there on all sides to avoid a bus strike."

MAYOR JIM WATSON

"A strike would suck. I'd have to drive and pay \$200 a month for parking." OC rider Ahmed Fadil said the last strike forced him to drive his three children to school and meant a daily two-hour commute.

"It was hell, for me," he said of the 52-day ordeal.



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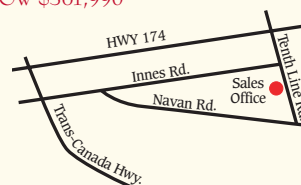
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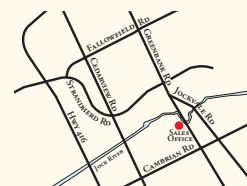
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Students. Merrimont



► With "oohs" and "aahs" from proud parents and cameras clicking, Manor Park Public School students performed their holiday concert yesterday.

MARC DESROSIERS/FOR METRO

Seasonal sounds

The spirit of the holiday season arrived early as family and friends were invited to join the students from Manor Park Public School to celebrate the holidays through a series of performances prepared and presented by the different classes at the school.

City honours driver who saved 3 lives

- Volunteer firefighter training never left heroic OC Transpo employee: Ottawa fire chief
- Driver says incident lasted no more than 15 minutes



SEAN
MCKIBBIN
@METRONEWS.CA

An OC Transpo driver who rescued three people from a burning apartment building was humble yesterday as he accepted a commendation for heroism at Ottawa City Hall.

"I was really just a small piece of the puzzle. Other people stepped up to help too and I'm just glad there

"He put his life on the line to save the lives of three others."

MAYOR JIM WATSON

were no injuries," said Peter Paquette, a 15-year veteran of OC Transpo and a former member of the Cumberland Volunteer Fire Department.

Mayor Jim Watson presented the Route 5 driver

with a gift and a certificate of recognition for his quick actions.

Paquette noticed a building in flames at 160 Laverne St. as he was driving his route Dec. 9. Making sure to park his bus and passengers out of the wind and smoke, Paquette radioed for help and then charged into the building.

Running up to the third floor, he kicked open a door and saved three tenants.



► Mayor Jim Watson, left, and Orleans Coun. Bob Monette, right, present an award for bravery to OC Transpo driver Peter Paquette.

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Don Cherry, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford and the politics of class warfare.
More at
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James Duthie

JAMES DUTHIE

'A SNAPSHOT OF SPORTS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS'

Ottawa native and TSN host James Duthie's sense of humour enlivens his new book, *The Day I (Almost) Killed Two Gretzkys*, a collection of 75 of his most popular sports columns from the last decade.

So you don't have to be a sports fan to enjoy the book?

A lot of the columns are sports-related, but sports are on the periphery. There are columns about having an MRI, remote controls, Anna Kournikova and my dog. There's quite a bit in there about my kids and things that appeal to the casual sports fan.

How did you choose which columns would be included? I dug through my hard drive. It was really fun going back. Some of the columns are moments in

time, but it's a snapshot of sports over the last 10 years. It's also my life.

Tell me about the title. I played in Wayne Gretzky's golf tournament two or three years ago, and I almost killed Wayne and (his father) Walter in the same round of golf... That would have been my legacy.

If you weren't a journalist, what do you think you would be? I was going to be a gym teacher. I got into McGill for phys-ed and Carleton to take journalism. I thought I was going to (be) homesick, so I went to Carleton. It worked out really well. So a gym teacher, a cop or personal masseuse for Scarlett Johansson.

● TRACEY TONG

Local kids shop in the name of the law

JOE LOFARO/FOR METRO



Ahmed Musa, 12, with Const. Francis Mask, shows off his latest Christmas purchase, made at the Billings Bridge shopping centre as part of the third annual CopShop event.

- ▶ Participants chosen based on need, academics or volunteer work
- ▶ Finding officers to help out 'wasn't a difficult task at all': Inspector



JOE LOFARO
OTTAWA@METRONEWS.CA

There was a heavy police presence at Billings Bridge Shopping Centre yesterday morning.

Armed with Christmas wish lists for the third annual CopShop, 30 police officers were each paired up with a local child, who was given a \$200 gift card from the mall to spend on toys and Christmas gifts.

After lunching with the officers, the kids dispersed throughout the mall with their personal officer in tow.

Insp. Uday Singh Jaswal, who was paired with Austin Davis, 10, called it an "inspiring and encouraging" experience.

"Most of the kids (whom)

"It brings a lot of awareness that we are in partnership with our police force."

LYNNE MARIE DENIS,
BILLINGS BRIDGE

you would think would be purchasing items for themselves end up buying mostly for family or for others," he said.

Shoppers noticed the police in the mall, and after learning about the event, they congratulated the officers on their work.

"We had many people this morning, even our clients that are shopping... have donated money out of the blue because they want to support the event," said Billings Bridge marketing director Lynne Marie Denis.

Firefighter recovering

A firefighter suffered smoke inhalation and first-degree burns to his face after being trapped in a house fire in the city's west end yesterday afternoon.

● TRACEY TONG

Tax hike to be 2.5%

Ottawa's 2011 draft budget will be limited to only a 2.5 per cent tax increase after a unanimous vote by city council. Mayor Jim Watson said the bylaw will keep planning on track.

● SEAN MCKIBBIN

Police seek witnesses...

Ottawa OPP is seeking witnesses who filmed two white males exiting a dark blue four-door Audi in the ditch near the junction of highways 417 and 174 at 12:40 p.m. yesterday.

● TRACEY TONG

...as well as victims

Were you hit by a bus on Tuesday? Ottawa police want to hear from you. They are seeking victims of a possible bus-pedestrian collision on the Ottawa River Parkway near Woodroffe.

● TRACEY TONG



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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2010

► John McDermott headlines a show that features special guests Dan Hill and Rosie MacKenzie Sunday.



Singer set to jingle bell rock

► Artist to perform music from Christmas Memories and Sharing Christmas, recently released Journey



**TRACEY
TONG**
@METRONEWS.CA

For singer John McDermott, the Christmas season starts in early November — and this year, it's going to stretch far into the new year.

McDermott, who has been coming to Ottawa "for 16 years, without missing a year," performs at Centre-

pointe Theatre Sunday as a part of a two-month tour.

In the meantime, "I get my Christmas shopping done on the road," he said.

Christmas will make an encore for the Scottish-born Toronto resident this year, when he begins recording his new Christmas album in January.

"We'll still be in the mood, and we're working

on that stuff all through Christmas holiday, so it'll be fresh in our minds."

But in between touring and recording, McDermott will be spending time with family — a subject close to his heart and figures prominently in his music.

"We don't really see each other over the year," said McDermott, who is one of 12 children.

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Snowsuits keep kids warm ... and hearts, too

► Online donations give a big boost to Ottawa fund



TRACEY TONG
@METRONWS.CA

For many children, the excitement over Ottawa's first big snowfall of the year was incomparable.

But for some young people, the cold emphasizes the harder times their families may be experiencing.

That's where the Snowsuit Fund of Ottawa comes in.

"Our need is great this time of year," said fund-raising co-ordinator Margaret Armour.

"We fully anticipate giving over 15,000 new snowsuits this year ... it's pretty cold today.

"Our challenge is that



► Owen Charters,
CanadaHelps.org CEO

the need never goes away."

The Snowsuit Fund is one of a growing number of local charities registered to receive online donations through CanadaHelps.org, which allows donors to search a database of 85,000 Canadi-

an charities and make a donation online.

With so many charities out there, donations are harder to get, said CanadaHelps.org CEO Owen Charters.

Statistics Canada said from November 2007 to November 2009, giving dropped from 28 to 23 per cent, he said. "Canadians are giving less and less each year."

Online giving makes things easier for everyone, said Charters.

It's easier for people to find a charity that means something to them, and gives small and medium-sized charities a cost-efficient way of bringing in donations, he added.

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OIL DISASTER

U.S. sues BP over Gulf spill

The Justice Department in Washington, D.C., yesterday sued BP Exploration and Production Inc. and eight other companies in the Gulf oil spill disaster in an effort to recover billions of dollars from the largest offshore spill in U.S. history.

The lawsuit alleges

that safety and operating regulations were violated in the period leading up to April 20. The Obama administration's lawsuit asks that the companies be held liable without limitation under the Oil Pollution Act for all removal costs and damages caused by the oil spill, including damages to natural resources.

It says that the defendants failed to keep the Macondo well under control during that period. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Evacuation drill staged in S. Korea

South Koreans stopped their cars, donned gas masks and ducked into underground shelters yesterday in the country's biggest-ever evacuation drill — a government attempt to prepare traditionally indifferent citizens for possible new attacks by North Korea.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UN lifts Iraq nuke sanctions

The UN Security Council yesterday lifted sanctions that prohibited Iraq from pursuing a civilian nuclear program, in a symbolic step to restore the country to the international standing it held before Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Labour protest leads to violence in Athens

ALKIS KONSTANTINIDIS/AP PHOTO



► Protesters throw petrol bombs during clashes in Athens, yesterday. Hundreds of protesters clashed with riot police across central Athens, smashing cars and hurling gasoline bombs during a massive labour protest.

► Riots erupt after 20,000 protesters march to parliament

Protesters clashed with riot police across Athens yesterday, torching cars, hurling gasoline bombs and sending Christmas shoppers fleeing in panic during a general strike against the government's latest austerity measures.

Police fired tear gas and flash grenades as the violence escalated outside parliament and spread to other parts of the capital.

Angry unions triggered the 24-hour strike to protest new labour reforms and pay cuts as Greece struggles to reshape its economy under conditions set by a 110-billion-euro (\$146-billion) international bailout. The strike also grounded flights, closed factories, disrupted hospitals and shut down trains, ferries and buses across the country.

7th It was the seventh strike this year by unions appalled at a wave of austerity policies meant to pull Greece out of its worst financial crisis since the Second World War.

In Athens, youths wearing black masks and ski goggles used sledgehammers to smash paving stones and hurled the rubble at police. A post office near parliament briefly caught fire, forcing employees and bystanders to run for safety.

Christmas shoppers fled as rioters hurled petrol bombs wrapped in bundles of firecrackers, causing small explosions when they landed. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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1,000 held in Moscow over riots

► New scuffles erupt after weekend of racially motivated violence

Russian police fearing more clashes between racist hooligans and ethnic minorities detained 1,000 people in a standoff near a Moscow train station yesterday, taking a strong stance against far right extremists after weekend rioting left dozens injured.

Hundreds of riot police outside the Kievsky station hauled mostly young men and teenagers shouting racist slogans into police vans. Officers confiscated an arsenal of weapons, in-

cluding knives and metal bars, police spokesman Viktor Biryukov said.

Resentment has been rising among Slavic Russians over the growing presence in Moscow of people from the southern Caucasus region, the home of numerous ethnic groups, most of them Muslim.

People from other parts of the former Soviet Union, including Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, also face ethnic discrimination.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



► Riot police officers detain a protester outside the Kievsky train station in Moscow yesterday.

Foreign aid. In Afghanistan



► Reto Stocker

MUSADEQ SADEQ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Red Cross under attack

Reto Stocker, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, yesterday sounded a warning of an increase in the number of Afghan armed groups interfering in the Red Cross's work, as bombings killed three children in the south and two NATO soldiers died elsewhere. The Red Cross had long been able to operate in even the most dangerous areas of Afghanistan because of a commitment to treat all people, but a rise of small armed bands has made negotiations difficult.

EU searches for proof in Kosovo organ claims

European Union police in Kosovo yesterday asked for "hard facts" to back up claims made by an investigator that civilian detainees of the Kosovo Liberation Army were shot to death to sell their kidneys on the black market.

Council of Europe investigator Dick Marty rocked Kosovo with his report released Tuesday that also suggested Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was once the "boss" of a criminal underworld behind the alleged grisly trade.

Thaci was the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army's

2,000 The number of police and justice workers with the European Union's EULEX unit in charge of investigating war crimes and overseeing Kosovo's weak justice system.

political head during the 1998-99 war for independence from Serbia.

His party just won the Kosovo's first general elections since it declared its independence from Serbia in 2008.

An earlier EU investigation into claims that organ harvesting took place in northern Albania did not come up with any proof, EU police mission spokeswoman Karin Lindal noted. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2010

Health-care costs linked to poverty: Report

► Author calls on all levels of government for solutions

Some 20 per cent of Canada's health-care costs can be directly attributed to low income and education levels, a new report says.

And reducing the innate health risks that poverty carries requires lifting the socioeconomic status of the country's poorest people, according to a Health Council of Canada report.

"There is a direct correlation (between) low incomes, low socioeconomic status and health," council head John Abbott says.

"And when you look at the pressures on the health-care system, who is using the system, it tends to be that same group."

Abbott says solutions must come not just from national and provincial health ministries, but

from all government agencies that can have a hand in poverty reduction.

"We need all the ministries sitting around and saying, 'Look, what can we do, what can we contribute to start to rebalance this in Canada?'" Abbott says.

Abbott says new government initiatives should be assessed, in part, on their likely impact on health, particularly in relation to socioeconomic factors.

He says he doesn't know if the health costs associated with poverty would simply be counterbalanced by new financing for social equalization programs.

Yet while that "math can be done," the alleviation of suffering would justify it, he says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Closing the gap

The link between low income levels and chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease is well established.

- Yet, factors that make poverty itself a health risk will remain endemic among the poor unless the socioeconomic gaps themselves are closed.
- Health promotion programs aimed at decreasing high-calorie, processed-food diets and increasing exercise levels do not penetrate society's lower reaches, where education levels tend to be poorer.



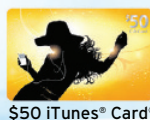
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► A polar bear is shown in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Global warming can be slowed enough to prevent a total loss of critical summer sea ice for polar bears, according to a new study released yesterday.

Polar bears not doomed: Study

► 'The problem is not irreversible': Research author

Two groups of scientists are suggesting a sliver of hope for the future of polar bears in a warming world.

A study published online yesterday rejects the often used concept of a "tipping point," or point of no return, when it comes to sea ice and the big bear that has become the symbol of climate change woes. The study

optimistically suggests that if the world dramatically changed its steadily increasing emissions of greenhouse gases, a total loss of critical summer sea ice for the bears could be averted.

Another research group projects that even if global warming doesn't slow — a more likely near-future scenario — a thin, icy refuge for the

bears would still remain between Greenland and Canada.

A grim future for polar bears is one of the most tangible and poignant outcomes of global warming. Four years ago, federal researchers reported that two-thirds of the world's polar bear habitat could vanish by mid-century.

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Two die in parking lot shootout

A mother loading her two-year-old son into a vehicle used her body to protect the toddler before she was shot and killed in an ensuing midday gun battle at a Sacramento shopping centre, sheriff's officials said yesterday.

Barbershop

► Detectives believe at least one gunman entered the Fly Cuts & Styles barbershop just before 1 p.m. and began shooting. ► At least one person inside the shop returned fire.

Monique Nelson, 30, had just strapped her son into his car seat when she was struck in the chest, and detectives believe she

positioned herself to protect her son, Sacramento County Sheriff's Sgt. Tim Curran said.

A second victim, 20-year-old Marvion Barksdale, also died from injuries suffered in the shootout after being taken to a hospital where he underwent surgery for a chest wound, Curran said. Five other men were injured in the gunfight. All are expected to survive.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Senate passes tax compromise

► Contentious \$858B tax bill passes in upper house by vote of 81-19

U.S. President Barack Obama's compromise tax deal with Republicans — a package of cuts that would add nearly one trillion dollars to the U.S. debt — won approval in the Senate yesterday.

Obama swiftly urged the House of Representatives, where Obama's fellow Democrats see the bill as overgenerous to the wealthy, to pass the \$858-billion measure without changes, a slap at Democratic liberals eager to toughen part of the bill that permits up to \$10 million to pass tax free to heirs on an estate.

If passed, the bill would spare Americans at every income level from larger tax bills beginning Jan. 1.

With opposition Republicans poised to take control of the House after last

New Congress

The bipartisan deal marks a test of how Obama will govern without his Democratic party in control of the House and with a reduced majority in the Senate.

► His readiness to reach accommodation with the opposition Republicans likely will set a pattern for the final half of his term.

month's landslide election victory, Obama had little choice but to drop his objections to an extension of lower assessments on wealthy Americans. Republicans had vowed to let cuts for lower- and middle-income earners to expire as well. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Pope. Entertainment



► Acrobats perform in front of Pope Benedict XVI, during his weekly general audience yesterday at the Vatican.

PIER PAOLO CITTO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Feats of strength

Four acrobats took their circus act to the Vatican, performing shirtless for Pope Benedict XVI during his weekly general audience. The Pellegrini Brothers took off their shirts as they came on stage yesterday to begin their show, which lasted a few minutes. They lifted each other in acrobatic poses, keeping balance with their bodies supported only by their arms, at one point creating a human tower.

EU gives award to dissident

► Empty chair set out for Cuban at human rights prize ceremony

A Cuban dissident used a video address at yesterday's award of the EU's main human rights prize to call for the release of political prisoners in his homeland and for the government to end attacks on the opposition.

Guillermo Farinas, a 48-year-old psychologist and freelance journalist, was not allowed by Cuba to travel to receive the Sakharov human rights prize in Strasbourg, France.

"It is important to note that the Cuban government is very weak. And because it is weak, it is more dangerous."

GUILLERMO FARINAS, PSYCHOLOGIST AND FREELANCE JOURNALIST

He said the travel ban was "irrefutable testimony to the fact that, unfortunately, nothing has changed (in Cuba)."

Farinas won the prize in October after his 134-day hunger strike helped draw attention to the plight of activists, opposition leaders and social critics in

Cuban jails.

Previous winners of the prize include Aung San Suu Kyi and Nelson Mandela. It was awarded twice before to Cubans: In 2002 to pro-democracy activist Oswaldo Paya; and in 2005 to a dissident group, Ladies in White.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



► Guillermo Farinas

Zuckerberg. Timely honour



► The cover for Time magazine's 2010 Person of the Year issue features Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

TIME MAGAZINE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Zuckerberg tops Queen

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg has been named Time magazine's Person of the Year for 2010. At 26, he is the youngest Person of the Year since the first one chosen, Charles Lindbergh, who was 25 when he was named in 1927, Time said yesterday. Zuckerberg beat out the Queen by just two weeks: She was 26 when she was named in 1952. Many had expected Time to choose newsmaking WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Germany gives \$80M to preserve Auschwitz

Germany pledged yesterday to pay 60 million euros (\$80 million) over the next year into a fund for Auschwitz-Birkenau to preserve the barracks, gas chambers and other evidence of Nazi crimes at the former death camp, some of which are deteriorating to the point of collapse.

Germany is the largest of several countries contributing to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Fund, which was set up in 2009 to gather money to maintain the 472-acre expanse made up of the original camp, Auschwitz, and the nearby

1M The barracks, gas chambers and other buildings are in need of urgent repair, having been worn down by the ravages of time and the pressure of more than one million visitors per year.

satellite camp of Birkenau.

The camp was operated by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during the Second World War. More than one million people, mostly Jews, died in the camp's gas chambers or through forced labour, disease or starvation.

Museum director Piotr Cywinski first issued a worldwide appeal for help in 2008, saying 120 million euros were needed to repair the memorial site.

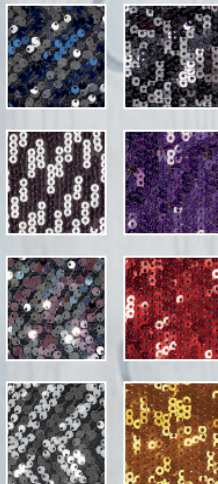
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By the numbers

3.2%

Improving financial market conditions and lingering low interest rates will boost Canadian economic growth to 3.2 per cent next year, slightly more robust than 2010's projected growth of 3.1 per cent, according to the latest economic outlook from RBC Economics. Growth slowed in the third quarter of this year, largely due to softness in the housing market and U.S. economy, the report said.

4.8%

New data show Canadian home sales grew in Novem-

ber for the fourth straight month but continued a trend of unfavourable comparisons to the same month last year, when sales reached record levels. The Canadian Real Estate Association said home resales were up 4.8 per cent last month compared to October. Home resales have also rebounded by 19.5 per cent from July, when the market hit a trough following the introduction of new mortgage rules, higher interest rates and a new tax in two provinces.

154.4M

Dundee Real Estate Investment Trust is set to buy real estate investor and developer Realex Properties Corp. for \$154.4 million in cash. Calgary-based Realex's value is pegged at \$385 million. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Watchdog, credit card firms face off over fees

► Visa, MasterCard say retailers can offer discounts for cash or debit

Canadian shoppers are paying all around higher prices because major credit card companies forbid retailers from charging credit card users a fee at the checkout, Canada's competition watchdog claims.

In an application filed yesterday with the Competition Tribunal, the Competition Bureau alleges that a "no-surcharge" rule and other policies of both Visa and MasterCard are "restrictive and anti-competitive."

The filing has reignited a war of words between the bureau on one side and the credit card companies on the other, who say the rules actually protect consumers from retailers who could slap fees on transactions and discriminate against card users.

Store owners are cur-

rently charged between 1.5 per cent and three per cent per credit card transaction, but the "no-surcharge" rule prevents them from tacking on a surcharge to offset the extra amount. The bureau claims those fees add up to about \$5 billion per year in hidden credit card fees for Canadian merchants — who pay some of the highest levels in the world.

Competition commissioner Melanie Aitken maintains that encourages businesses to bury the surcharges in the prices of all their products — no matter what payment method is used.

The bureau also takes issue with credit card policies that prevent retailers from encouraging consumers to use other payment options, like cash or



► Visa and MasterCard process about 90 per cent of all credit card transactions in the country.

debit, which cost retailers less, and a requirement that merchants must accept all credit cards offered by a company, including premium cards that carry higher fees for acceptance.

However, the credit card companies and a consumer association argued that removing the rules would allow merchants to charge credit card users

exorbitant fees that can vary wildly while at the same time keeping current prices intact.

MasterCard said if businesses were forced to charge a fee for use, it would result in a form of discrimination against credit card holders, who would have to pay more for using the cards.

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GIMME SHELTER—THE CANADIAN VERSION

He says ...

JOHN MAZEROLLE



Thanks to man's hubris and God's Great Plan, this country is being walloped by extreme weather, raising the spectre of car accidents, property damage, and a slew of Canadian disaster movies with names like **Snow!** and **The Day Saskatchewan Stood Still**.

The recent bad weather — affecting everyone from coast to coast except Margaret Wente and Rex Murphy — reminds us that Canada will be hit by more calamities as the Earth's weather patterns change.

Deluges. Dumpings. Death from the skies. It won't be long before Environment Canada's

special weather statements just say, "Pray."

Meteorologists concerned about climate change spend months analyzing information from dozens of satellites, hundreds of monitoring stations, and thousands of hands sticking out windows. Then they give up, call a press conference, and blame everything on El Niño.

That might sound imprecise, but it's a big improvement on the early 1900s, when weather prognosticators relied largely on the reactions of barnyard animals. For instance, a meteorologist would take a live chicken, throw it into the air, and make his wind readings based on the chicken's speed, direction, impact crater, and gible radius.

We at Metro care deeply

about you, the reader, because you, the reader, could one day become you, the advertiser, which is why I've prepared a special chart that explains the different levels of storm and how quickly they will kill you. You're welcome.

Category 1: Trees sway; reporters' raincoats flutter; kids go sliding. (Media designation: Snowmageddon)

Category 2: Telephone wires whistle; reporters standing in the snow yell, "There's a lot of snow!"; televisions tragically lose reception late in the third period. (Media designation: Apocalypse (Snow))

Category 3: Telephone poles whistle; storm jokes appear in late-night monologues; reporters comically flap in the breeze à la Kermit the Frog in a Big Bad Wolf sketch. (Media designation:

Possible El Niño Link Storm)

Category 4: Television news executives whistle; people pray to Jesus; storm cleanses gene pool of particularly stupid surfers. (Media designation: Possible al-Qaida Link Storm)

Category 5: People pray to all available gods; crazy people yell, "You call this a storm?" then blow away; script rights for movie sold to Michael Bay. (Media designation: Award Nomination Storm).

Fortunately, winter eventually comes to an end. Then all you'll have to worry about is droughts, skin cancer, and hurricanes. Metro reminds you to have a live chicken ready, just in case.



Read more of John Mazerolle's columns at metronews.ca/hesays

Cartoon

MICHAEL DE ADDE

\$h*! that Santa says



Worth mentioning

Santa has succumbed to Twittermania. Actually, multiple Santas of varying integrity have succumbed to Twittermania. Some are honest-to-goodness jolly old elves who want to bring joy into the hearts of children around the world. Others would like to sell you things. A few are downright rude.

Here are a few of your options:

You would not let your child watch @loadedSanta if he was on TV. He has a foul mouth and, apparently, a venereal disease.

Loaded Santa has one competitor in the "Most Vulgar" category. That would be

Jolly old tweeter



@RealSantaClaus, full name Santa Hussein Claus.

NORAD Santa has clout. In fact, @noradsanta is so well-connected that he appears to have hired someone to tweet for him — probably a young, nerdy elf. He's a little dry — maybe he's following military protocol? — but otherwise @noradsanta is

as good as it gets.

@NorthPolePost, who, like the others, touts himself as "the real" Santa. He tweets about how cute Mrs. Claus is and how much he loves lamb stew. He responds to tweeted letters from his fans without swearing. If St. Nick is really on Twitter, this could be him.

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Metro Minute with Ottawa Storytellers

These aren't your usual Christmas stories. Join the Ottawa Storytellers as they delve into personal stories of presents long since opened, egg nog long since drunk and family reconciliations at the National Arts Centre's Fourth Stage tonight at 7:30.

Tonight, three storytellers, including Sherri Yazdani, Mary Wiggin and Kim Kilpatrick, share their

perspectives on the madness and merriment that we all encounter at Christmas.

While Yazdani dedicates her performance to all Canadians who are serving our country, Wiggin will be sharing renowned sense of language. Tickets are \$20, and \$15 for seniors and students from the NAC box office or ticketmaster.ca. ● TRACEY TONG



► Sherri Yazdani performs at the NAC tonight.

CONTRIBUTED



▶ Jack Nicholson reunited with writer-director James L. Brooks for the upcoming comedy *How Do You Know*.

All play and no work makes Jack happy



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METRO WORLD NEWS IN LOS ANGELES

It's been three years since Jack Nicholson's last movie — *The Bucket List* with Morgan Freeman — but the Hollywood icon wouldn't exactly say he's been missing a lot of work.

"I love it, not working," Nicholson says. "I'm kind of a guy who likes to prove things. Everybody always said, 'You couldn't not work.' Well, I'm kind of proving them wrong."

His latest, *How Do You Know*, finds him playing Paul Rudd's intimidating father, watching his son

navigate a love triangle with Owen Wilson and Reese Witherspoon.

The movie re-teams Nicholson and writer-director James L. Brooks, who has twice directed to an Academy Award.

"He's kind of close to me. It's a privilege to work with Jim," Nicholson says. "A couple Oscars didn't hurt cementing the relationship. That's how you know you're in love."

Just because they're old friends doesn't mean Brooks goes easy on the 73-year-old actor. In fact, Nicholson says, his old pal can be a bit tough sometimes.

"This crying scene I had with Paul [Rudd], I'm do-

"I'm kind of a guy who likes to prove things. Everybody always said, 'You couldn't not work.' Well, I'm kind of proving them wrong."

JACK NICHOLSON

ing it like this and all of a sudden [James] comes running out from the back and he says, 'I don't think we want the grips laughing around the television set in the middle of a scene like this.'" Nicholson remembers.

"And I thought, 'This is a comedy. I never had direction like this.' Don't make anybody laugh! I thought, Jesus Christ. Then he forgot it! I told him this the other night and he forgot he did it.

Somehow it's inspiring."

With nothing new on his agenda, Nicholson is looking forward to returning to his life of leisure.

"I like not working. I know that's kind of hideous and blasphemous, but I really do," he says. "And I think I've started to infect others of my young guys. I had a conversation with Leo [DiCaprio] and he said, 'Geez, I love not working.' I said, 'See what I mean?' I don't want to infect him."

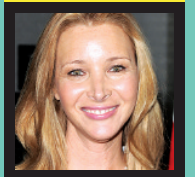
So what keeps Nicholson busy if it's not acting? "I just like getting up some time between 11 and 1 p.m., which is not movie hours — unless you're doing night movies," he starts before listing off his current hobbies. "Play golf. I got a couple of kids in college, so I'm on the phone a lot. See my pals, chase women around. Not too much. Talk to my congressmen, go to funerals."

And what about going to the Staples Center, where Nicholson can regularly be seen sitting court-side, supporting the Los Angeles Lakers?

"That's more of a job," he says with a gruff laugh. "I have to be there."



Scene in brief



Lisa Kudrow's TV series *Who Do You Think You Are?* has lined up Tim McGraw, Lionel Richie and other stars who want to trace their family roots.

NBC said Tuesday that the new season of the show will also include Ashley Judd, Steve Buscemi, Vanessa Williams, Rosie O'Donnell and Kim Cattrall.

Kudrow, the former *Friends* star, is an executive producer for the show.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Roger Ebert's new movie review TV show to premiere in January, cleared for 192 US markets. Learn how to scan on page 3.

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Album reviews

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**Michael Jackson**

Album: Michael
Label: Sony

🌟🌟 The challenge here is to put aside all the pre-release chatter about this album being a cash grab. Will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas has even denounced it as “disrespectful” to the gloved one’s memory. All of that maybe true. Nonetheless, there’s some decent music here. These 10 tracks, after all, have been pieced together from unfinished remnants. There are times when you’re left cringing and asking aloud ‘is that really Michael singing?’

Considering that, the estate’s production team has done some Herculean work. Indeed, it’s amazing that this disc contains only two or three true dogs. There’s the ridiculously self-serving Breaking News, and even 50 Cent’s spurious snarl couldn’t save the laughably horrid Monster. The lead single Hold My Hand is more Akon than MJ but it’s already doing well on the charts. Michael has its moments. The gospel-tinged Keep Your Head Up is truly uplifting and the album’s top track, (I Like) The Way You Love Me, is a surprisingly delight.

🌟 GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM

**Crystal Bowersox**

Album: Farmer’s Daughter
Label: Sony

🌟🌟 Crystal Bowersox’s ability to belt out blues rock a la Melissa Etheridge or Janis Joplin made her a favourite to win last year’s American Idol. Her vintage-style

vocals only got her to second place, though. So on her debut disc, Bowersox wisely tailors her talents toward a country rock audience, ala Miranda Lambert. The result is impressive, but fails to deliver a star-making knockout punch. 🌟 GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM

**R. Kelly**

Album: Love Letter
Label: Jive

🌟🌟 “I want to bring the love songs back to the radio” sings Robert Kelly on his tenth album. With Love Letter, his effort to do so is a valiant one, as Kells tones down the crazy quite a few notches to return to the slow jams and ballads that built his career. Those hoping he’d return to the silk-sheeted R&B should find solace in Love Letter.

🌟 CAM LINDSAY

**Ryan Adams and The Cardinals**

Album: Cardinals III/IV
Label: Pax Am

🌟🌟 Recorded in 2006, Adams’ fifth album with the Cardinals saw them break from Easy Tiger’s twang to

explore some spirited rock ‘n’ roll. Like 2005’s Cold Roses, there’s too much to absorb at once, but thankfully the concept is loose and the band is fully amplified, leaving Adams to fully indulge in a tribute to The Replacements. 🌟 CAM LINDSAY

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Why worry about album sales?

► **Rapper Flo Rida has seen much success with his singles, which have generated millions**

Flo Rida has sold millions when it comes to hit singles, but his albums have yet to get that kind of love from music fans.

His first two albums haven't reached gold status, and his latest, *Only One Flo (Part 1)*, debuted at No. 107 on the charts earlier this month.

But Flo Rida said he's not concerned with how many albums he sells.

"You're trying to sell records, sell singles — do it all. But I'm not too fond of even just worrying about that," he said. "The most important thing is just, you know, connecting with the fans on a worldwide basis because a lot of times you'll see numbers and that doesn't play a part in the whole worldwide numbers."

The rapper's first two CDs, 2008's *Mail On Sunday* and last year's

Protogé

► Flo Rida says that with the success of Lil Wayne protégé Nicki Minaj, it's a great time for him to market his own female rapper, 18-year-old Brianna.

► "Shout out to Nicki Minaj for doing her thing and just, you know, definitely keeping that lane open," he said of the animated rapper.

► "But Brianna, she's been doing this for a long time," he said. "And at this point she's definitely well-rounded. She has the look, she has the versatility (and) she's very compassionate about hip-hop."

R.O.O.T.S., have sold 430,000 and 266,000 units, according to Nielson SoundScan.

But Flo Rida's singles have topped the charts and



► Flo Rida at June's 2010 VH1 Hip Hop Honors.

sold millions digitally. His debut song, the party jam *Low*, has sold 5.7 million units, while the up-tempo *Right Round* has moved 4.7 million singles in sales; both songs hit the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Hot

100 chart.

The 30-year-old said selling millions of singles is just as good as selling millions of albums.

"When you look at the numbers it definitely ... adds up to that," he said.

"So I'm doing pretty good."

Club Can't Handle Me, the first single from Flo Rida's latest album, is quickly approaching double platinum status. It features French disc jockey-producer David Guetta; other

guests on the album include Ludacris, Gucci Mane and Akon.

The eight-track album will have a sequel set for release "in the next couple months," Flo Rida said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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TV watch list

Tune in to this creepy Christmas classic

MOVIES. Amid all the cheery, wistful Christmas specials infiltrating the

airwaves is a less saccharine holiday classic: Gremlins, the 1984's hilarious horror flick.

What better pre-Christmas stress release than watching the titular green devils terrorize a peaceful town?

► **Gremlins**
Comedy/horror
CHCH, 8 p.m. EST

The dark side of college ball

SPORTS. ESPN's excellent "30 for 30" series continues with Pony Excess, a documentary look at a college football team that came apart at the seams in the 1980s.

The Mustangs of Southern Methodist University commonly violated regu-

lations — with help from local Dallas oil barons and real estate tycoons — until the school's football program was suspended entirely by the NCAA in 1987. Director Thaddeus D. Matula graduated from SMU's film school.

► **Pony Excess**
Documentary
ESPN, 7 p.m. EST



► Eric Stonestreet, left, and Jesse Tyler Ferguson

Inside a Modern Family

► Metro sits down with TV couple

One of the best sitcoms to hit television in recent years is the Emmy award winning show *Modern Family*. The hilarious storylines revolve around a married gay couple who've adopted a Vietnamese daughter; an older man and his much younger vivacious Colombian wife; and a homemaker married to a big kid of a husband raising their three children.

Actors Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Eric Stonestreet play married couple Mitchell and Cameron, and Stonestreet won an Emmy this year for his comedic role. Metro sat down with the on-screen couple on the show's set.

your characters since we meet Cam's mother (played by Celia Weston)?

ES: I say in that episode that she's raised many kids, a couple of barns and a whole lot of hell, so now we know that Cam has siblings who we'll eventually meet at some point. I loved working with Celia as I remember her from watching *Alice* as a kid. She plays the perfect inappropriate mother who gives a lot of open mouth kisses to people she meets for the first time, which is a storyline taken from one of the writers' personal experiences.

JTF: We are now excited to meet who Cam's sister might be. We do casting calls in our heads all the time... What about this person? We've cast Al Pacino in about seven different roles!

What is your definition of a "modern family?"

JTF: To me it means something that is all encompassing; all ethnicities, all sexualities and no ageism. I would hope that would be the universal term. I had never really given it much thought until I heard Ricky Martin refer to his family as a 'modern family,' which I thought was kind of interesting.

Has a storyline ever been stolen from your own lives and ended up on the show?

JTF: Oh yeah, lots. I had to come out to my father three times, so that was in the script. And ironically, my dad used to make T-shirts for us kids and Jay makes these T-shirts that read: Clear and Present Danger. But just so we're clear, my father has got that I'm a gay man now!

Can you talk about how we've learned to know about

Your relationship is so convincing on the show. Did it come naturally to you both?

JTF: Eric and I are so comfortable around each other. We did do a chemistry read in the very beginning but I think it comes down to the fact that we like each other as people. We had that instant comfort zone, which was lucky for both of us.

ES: Chemistry from my perspective comes from a sort of willingness and an open heart to service the moment, the scene, the script and chemistry also comes from a desperation for your career! Like, we desperately realized that this was a great show and we had a great opportunity to have an awesome relationship on the show, so we wanted to make this work.

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KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES



▶ American Idol judge Randy Jackson, left, and host Ryan Seacrest.

A newer, softer version of American Idol

▶ With Simon Cowell gone, new season won't feature the same criticism of contestants seen in years past

American Idol has lost its mean streak.

The hit Fox television show once exalted equally for its sensational singing and cutting criticism is embracing a softer approach this year following the exit of top villain Simon Cowell and the addition of new judges Jennifer Lopez and Steven Tyler.

The famous performers said they are taking turns nurturing this year's contestants, some as young as 15 for the first time ever, and providing tough feedback.

"We all want them to do well because we actually believe in them," said music producer Randy Jackson, the lone remaining original Idol judge.

The change is part of an

8

American Idol's ratings dropped 8 per cent last season. As part of its makeover, results episodes will move from Wednesday to Thursday nights when the show returns in January; Tuesday performances will move to Wednesdays.

ongoing makeover of the popular singing contest as the former mega-hit enters its 10th season with sagging ratings. Hoping to borrow some of Sin City's showbiz sparkle, Jackson, Tyler and Lopez moved to Las Vegas for the week to

narrow down a group of 60 finalists to 40 favourites.

The episode is being filmed at the LOVE theatre, a Beatles tribute hall at the Mirage hotel and casino on the Las Vegas Strip.

This is the first time American Idol has taken its so-called Hollywood round on the road.

During the episode, contestants will sing Beatles' tunes on stage with a live band, Lopez said.

"You really get to see who are the performers and who is not going to be the performers," said Lopez, clad in a silver jumper that barely covered her tanned thighs, at a news conference outside the theatre yesterday.

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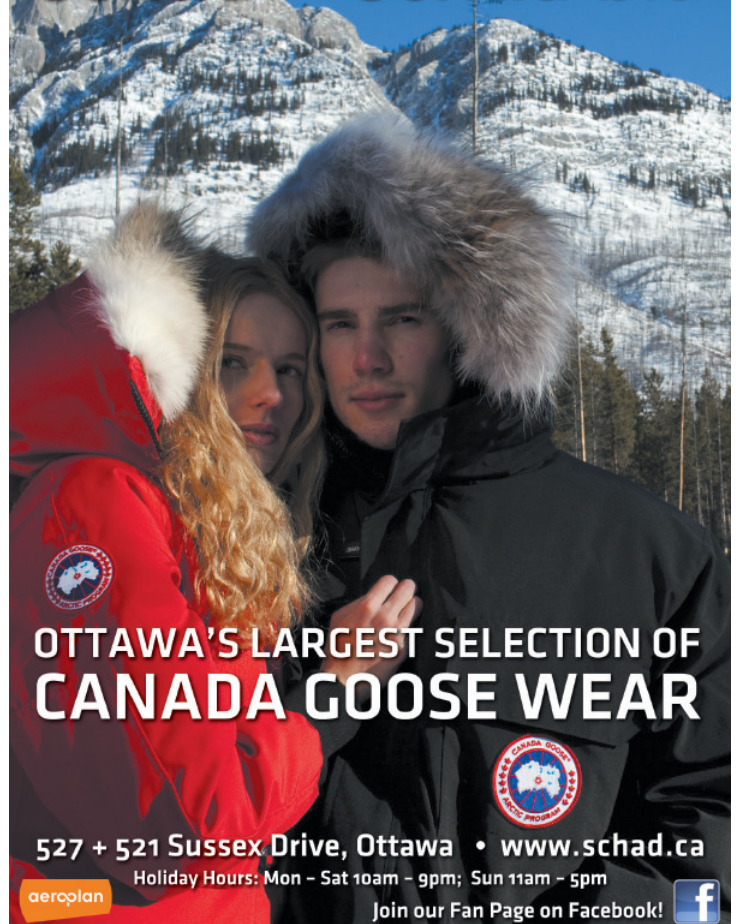


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Christmas came early for Sheen

▶ Porn star alleges actor shouted racial slurs, choked her and threatened to kill her in hotel suite ▶ Sheen sued Anderson for \$1M over allegations

Charlie Sheen can rest easy this holiday season after authorities announced he's off the hook for his Plaza Hotel rampage in which Capri Anderson accused him of terrorizing her while he trashed a hotel suite, according to TMZ.

Anderson had filed a police report accusing Sheen of assault and battery, and false imprisonment.

"There will be no arrests made in the case," an NYPD official says.

● METRO



▶ Charlie Sheen

Miley angry with friend over video leak

Miley Cyrus is reportedly furious with Anna Oliver, the friend who supposedly shot the video of Cyrus smoking a bong filled with

salvia that hit the Internet last week, according to Hollyscoop.

"Miley is really pissed because they were close," a

source says, explaining that Cyrus believes Oliver had something to do with the video leaking.

But Cyrus' anger is

nothing compared to her fans, who went after Oliver on Twitter, forcing the young woman to delete her account. ● METRO

Connelly, Bettany expecting second child

Jennifer Connelly and husband, Paul Bettany, are looking ready to welcome another member to their family, as Connelly is expecting their second child, according to People magazine.

"Becoming a mother has made all the difference in terms of learning to take more responsibility for my-

self and my life," she tells the magazine. "The biggest thing for me is wanting my kids to grow up safely and have happy lives. To me, that's enough."

Connelly and Bettany have a seven-year-old son together, and Connelly has another child, 13, from a previous relationship.

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▶ Jennifer Connelly and Paul Bettany



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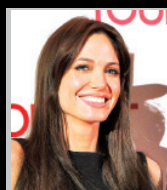
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3 life

Pumps for stunts



Angelina Jolie had her own request for stunt gear in the new movie *The Tourist*: stilettos. Jolie did her stunts in Salvatore Ferragamo heels. The heel height came down a bit for the most active scenes, but "she basically toughed it out in her shoes," says costume designer Colleen Atwood. Jolie came to her first fitting for the flick wearing her own pair of metal-tipped stiletto pumps that would eventually become her character's.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Target and William Rast form a purposeful relationship for late-holiday sales

Who can forget the thigh-high boots Julia Roberts wore in *Pretty Woman*? Twenty years later, tall boots are back and this time on ladies of fashion – not just ladies of the night



Above-the-knee boots are big in the music world, sheathing the legs of megastars such as Rihanna (shown above), Madonna and Lady Gaga.

Get a leg up in boots that kick butt

Though thigh-high boots rocked the runway more than a year ago, it's taken some time for the trend to gain acceptance by a broader audience. Now, above-the-knee styles are adding a sexy-yet-chic statement to skinny jeans, leggings, skirts and dresses.

"Every girl wants to be a little sexy," says Stuart Weitzman, a footwear designer. "Do you know an American woman who hasn't seen *Pretty Woman*?"

Weitzman, who has made tall boots in past seasons, says above-the-knee boots are so popular now because women wear tights with many looks –

even miniskirts and shorts. "They complement the new kind of dress that many, many girls are using today. It sort of breaks up the whole naked leg look and becomes an acceptable adaptation of modern dressing."

Options are plentiful. Choose a dramatic pair with a high heel, a mid-height wedge or a flat-bottomed boot. They come plain or embellished with chains, buckles and studs, and with details like distressing and lacing. Depending on the look you want, they can add glamour to an evening ensemble or warmth for running errands all day.

"Trust me. It's like wearing a legging. It elongates everything."

FOOTWEAR DESIGNER
BRIAN ATWOOD

"They're sexy and fun and everyone can wear them in their own way," says Brian Atwood, who was recently named Footwear News' designer of the year.

The beauty of the style, he says, is that it lengthens your appearance, regardless of your height. "Trust me," he says. "It's like wearing a legging. It elongates everything."

The public just needed

to adjust to a style that, for some, spur thoughts of fetishism.

The success of the high-end designer collections showed retailers that the every-day shopper was ready for the look this year, said Avril Graham, executive fashion and beauty editor of Harper's Bazaar.

"It had been seen as a very high-fashion look and super trendy," she says. "Now, it's so much more accessible. I've been traveling across the states in the last few months and I've been noticing so many more regular women are wearing this look."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



1 LUCKY LEGS

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Style pick

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"In terms of winter-appropriate eye colours, I think it's best to stick with suede-like taupey colours. If you want a more dramatic look, you can always use a liner on the eyelash line," says Talia Shobrook, celebrity makeup artist. "Try Dior 5-Coulours Eyeshadow in Amber Design. It has a great mix of neutral colors."

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Remix his style



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▶ Reviving those classic separates



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Entertain like a designer

► Tips from HGTV's Peter Fallico on how to have the perfect holiday party

DECOR MOMENT



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Keep it simple and fresh when entertaining, says Peter Fallico, host of HGTV's Home To Flip; a show that follows him through buying, reno-

vating, decorating and selling fixer uppers. His passion for fixing up old houses and incorporating smart decorating ideas comes through on his television shows — and in real life.

I recently interviewed Fallico at an old home he recently purchased to renovate. Looking around the house it's clear to see that he has a lot of work ahead of him and it's hard to believe that he recently pulled

off a fabulous holiday party for 40 people in the old house.

Fallico gave me his scoop on entertaining and decorating trends for holiday gatherings at home.

How are we entertaining differently than we did in the past?

I think we are all craving for formality, but because of less time and busier lifestyles we need to keep things simple. With the

trends of larger, open kitchens we are seeing more casual holiday parties rather than using a formal dining room.

How do you entertain friends and family during the holidays?

I held my annual holiday party in an old house that I've recently purchased to renovate. I created an entire evening using various areas of the house.

I started off with drinks in the unfurnished living room, then an informal dinner around the old kitchen/dining area. I then moved all my guests into a cosy den for after dinner drinks and watched a funny holiday movie.

I filled the old fireplace (not even sure if it works yet) with a dozen candles and laid a large antique Persian rug on the floor with lots of cushions. I used the dining table as a buffet table and placed it in the centre of the dining area room and I had comfortable chairs and a large banquettes off in the corners for guests to lounge around.

What's your best entertaining/party stress-reliever tip?

I am not a big cook so I always try to order in most of the meal. I might make some appetizers and a soup or salad; the rest comes from a local caterer.

I try to enlist help; a friend or family member to help greet guests, take coats, help with serving up food, etc. I keep flower arrangements versatile and simple to be used after the party, and around other areas' simple lilies teamed with red branches or holy creates a clean, simple arrangement.



► Peter Fallico from HGTV's Home To Flip.

I don't worry about trendy colours and themes for holiday decorating. I keep to white, silver, clear glass, crystal and fresh greens; they are all classics that never go out of style.

Peter Fallico's best tips for setting the mood?

Choose one scent from candles and room sprays and dabble them around the house. I like fresh green scents like pine, cedar and spruce.

I choose a type of music that sets the tone for different times of the party; classical as guests arrive, jazzier during mingling with drinks and then quieter while guests are eating. After dinner I show off my most recent collection of dance music to get my guest's spirits up and the dancing started.

I bring out all my silver, crystal and glass objects to create sparkly groupings

Responsible host

- **Transportation.** Part of being a great host is being a responsible host. Encouraging guests to take public transit or taxis, hiring a bartender to monitor controlled alcohol pouring, have a designated driver at your party or have an extra bed ready.
- **Club Metro.** Are you hosting a holiday party? Baileys Canada and Metro want to help you be a responsible host. Enter at clubmetro.com and you could win transportation to get your guests home safely.

for impact on buffet and coffee tables. No need in keeping it locked in a china cabinet; the holidays are the time to unleash small touches of collected luxury.

For more holiday decorating ideas and tips visit hgtv.ca.

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Old-fashioned tastes

► Visiting the Millers Oven is a trip back in time

SHARI GOODMAN



► A bacon cheddar quiche with salad.

LUNCH RUSH

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Walking into The Millers Oven tea house in Manotick is like entering Aunt Mary's parlour, complete with servers who look appropriate to the setting. Even the restaurant's Please Wait to be Seated sign is done in needlepoint.

The Miller's Oven is a fundraising project as much as it is a restaurant.

The service was quick and friendly, with coffee being topped up at

im-

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pressive intervals.

The tomato and pasta soup was flavourful.

However, the pasta had been lingering too long in the broth.

A crustless quiche included an appropriate blend of bacon and cheddar and was moist and nicely baked.

And the signature dessert: the mile high lemon pie was very true to its unique name.

Unfortunately, the filling of the pie was overly sweet and lacked the tartness of authentic lemon curd.

The raisin pie was simply raisin pie.

All in all, the Millers

Oven tea house is a charming place to go for a bit of nostalgia to accompany your cup of coffee.

► **The Millers Oven**
1137 Mill Street, Manotick
613-692-4304
Hours: Daily (9 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

Rating: 2 and a half out of 5
Price range: \$
Reservations: Yes

Butter Tart Shortbreads

Preparation:

1 Filling: In a saucepan, stir together raisins, butter, sugar and cornstarch. Stir in hot water and cook over medium heat until thick. Remove from heat and stir in lemon zest and juice. Let cool.

2 Shortbread: Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F). Using an electric mixer, beat butter with 250 ml (1 cup) sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and mix well with a wooden spoon.

3 In a separate bowl, whisk flour and cornstarch together. Add to butter mixture and mix until dough is just combined. Dough will be stickier than typical cookie dough.

4 Divide dough in half and press one-half into the bottom of a parchment-lined 2.5-l (9-by-9-inch) square pan. Pour cooled filling evenly over shortbread base.

5 Divide remaining dough into 4 pieces. With floured hands, pat each piece to fit 1/4 of the pan until the top is covered. Smooth top pieces together with a knife. Sprinkle top with 50 ml (1/4 cup) sugar.

6 Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until shortbread is golden brown. Let cool to room temperature and cut into squares.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ingredients :

Filling

- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) sultana raisins
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) butter
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) granulated sugar
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) cornstarch
- 250 ml (1 cup) hot water
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) lemon zest
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) lemon juice

Shortbread

- 250 ml (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 250 ml (1 cup) granulated sugar, plus 50 ml (1/4 cup) for sprinkling
- 1 egg
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) cornstarch
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) lemon juice



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Fragrant Lamb with Spinach



Preparation:

1 Heat oil in large pot or flameproof casserole. Add onions, garlic and ginger; saute, stirring frequently, until onions are golden, 15 minutes.

2 Stir in paprika, cumin, coriander, white pepper,

cinnamon, crushed cardamom, bay leaves and salt. Stir briefly over moderate heat, then stir in yogurt and water.

3 Add lamb, mix well, and cover pot. Simmer gently until lamb is tender, about 1 1/4 hours.

4 Add tomatoes, spinach and cilantro. Cook, stirring, until spinach has wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Taste for seasoning and remove bay leaf. Serve.

RECIPE COURTESY OF READER'S DIGEST

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 5 cm piece fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
- 1 red chili pepper, seeded

- 2 tsp paprika
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- Seeds from 8 cardamom pods, crushed
- 2 bay leaves

- Salt to taste
- 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
- 2/3 cup water
- 500 g lean boneless lamb, cubed
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 250 g fresh baby spinach
- 4 tbsp chopped cilantro

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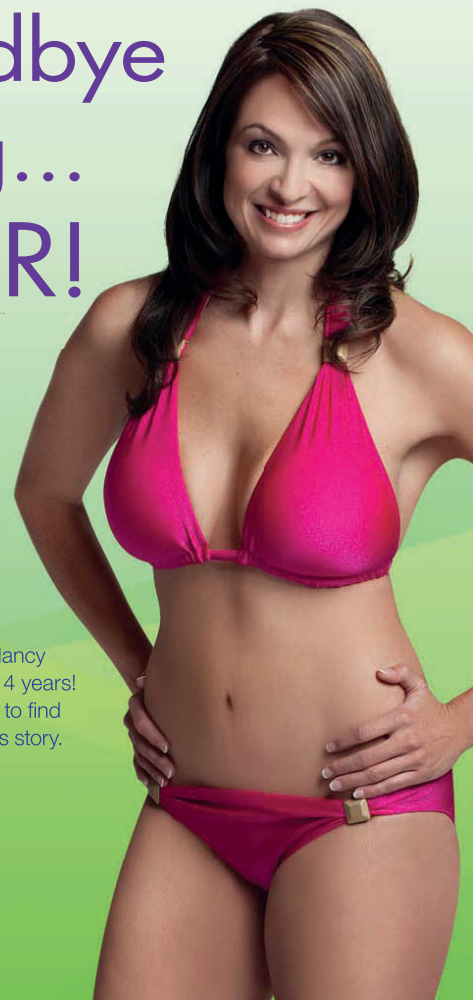
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Make eyes light up



A fuzzy Christmas

For those whose pets are family, check out our gifts for furry children. {page 34}



Deck out your home

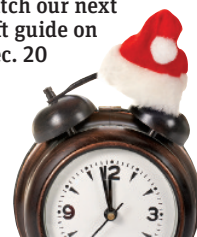
Great gifts for yourself or someone special {page 42}



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Gifts with a bite

► This year, give these items to make your pet or pet owner a little happier

YVETTE VAN VEEN
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Pet people love splurging during the holiday season. And why not? Shopping for a pet — or pet owner — can be fun. Splurging doesn't need to be all glitz and no function.

In our home the holidays are a time to inspect toys, leashes and collars and replace any that show signs of wear. Thankfully this year manufacturers are offering a wide array of innovative products that make life with pets easier, safer and a lot more fun.

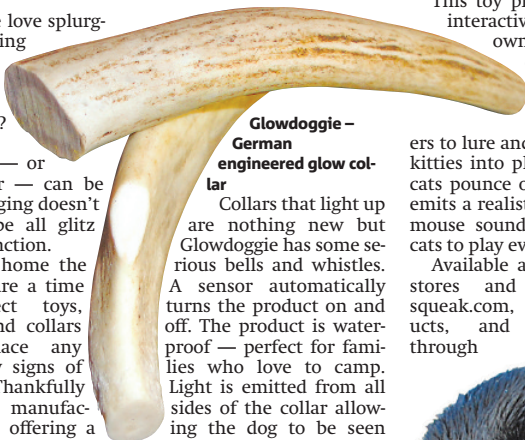
DOGS

Chew This by This & That — naturally shed deer antler chews.

Dogs love to chew. Deer antlers are an alternative to traditional bones. This line is 100 per cent natural and 100 per cent digestible. Unlike many chew products it does not turn mushy or leave smelly stains. It's long-lasting and suitable for power chewers.

Available at pet supply stores or thisandthatcanine.ca. Price ranges

from \$12 to \$30 depending on size.



Glowdoggie — German engineered glow collar

Collars that light up are nothing new but Glowdoggie has some serious bells and whistles. A sensor automatically turns the product on and off. The product is waterproof — perfect for families who love to camp. Light is emitted from all sides of the collar allowing the dog to be seen from all directions. It also allows oncoming motorists to see pets and their people during evening walks.

Available at glowdoggie.com. Approximately \$49.99

CATS

Skinneez by Spot — stuffing free, cat-nip filled toys.

This line provides a wide assortment of animal shaped toys. They will appeal to cats that like to carry around their, "prey." The skunk and squirrel are particularly appealing. Bushy tails combined with catnip bring out the hunter in your feline. The absence of stuffing allows cats to grab, drag and carry the toy with ease.

Available at pet supply stores and at ethicalpet.com, click on cat products menu 2009. Price ranges from \$3 to \$5.

Play-N-Squeak — interactive cat toys

This toy provides great interactive play with owners. Some come with finger bands allowing owners to lure and tempt their kitties into play mode. As cats pounce on the toy, it emits a realistic electronic mouse sound — enticing cats to play even more.

Available at pet supply stores and at playn-squeak.com, go to products, and scroll through

mouse toys. Price ranges from \$5 to \$10.

PET LOVERS

Born to Bark. My Adventures with an Irrepressible and Unforgettable Dog by Stanley Coren

Coren is a long-time fixture in Canadian dog training circles. In this book he describes his personal journey and how it led to a little terrier

Send the gift of money.



Help those in need by making a donation to an animal shelter. If money is not an option, many shelters will gratefully take used but clean towels, blankets and pet supplies.

Shelters and rescues also benefit when you purchase gift items directly from them. You can find unique gifts at their local fundraisers.

Pet owner's facing economic hardships may also welcome a gift certificate for pet food. And remember that not all gifts cost money. Offer to walk a pet for someone who is elderly, ill or injured.

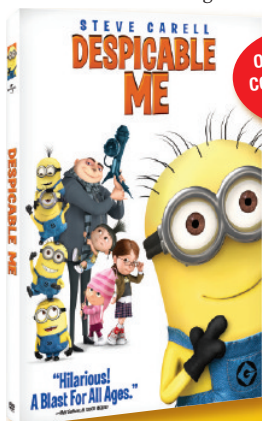
named Flint.

It's the story of an underdog — the one who should have failed. Pet owners can enjoy a heartwarming read proving that there is no such thing as impossible. Best of all it showcases normal life with pets. Coren writes candidly about his own errors and eccentricities. It's a refreshing change from reality shows where experts seem infallible and owners are made to look foolish.

Available at book stores. Price ranges from \$17 for the e-book to \$30 for the hardcover.

GIVE BACK

Remember that not all animals have the luxury of getting gifts. Some don't even have homes.



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TECH LOVER'S DREAM

1 MICROSOFT \$119.95

Microsoft LifeCam Studio Full 1080p HD sensor delivers widescreen video at 16:9 at up to 30 frames/second. High-fidelity microphone for more natural audio. Major electronic retailers



1

2 ALIENWARE \$799

For the gamers in your life, the Alienware M11x is the perfect gift. At just 4.5 lbs, the M11x is the most powerful 11-inch gaming notebook on the market. dell.ca



2

3 SAMSUNG \$349.99

The T10 camcorder boasts an ultra compact and lightweight body, a 2.7" Touch LCD display, and incorporates an advanced 1 / 4" 5.1 M Pixel BSI CMOS Sensor. Records at 1920 x 1080 60 i Full HD resolution Major electronic retailers



3

4 KODAK \$199.95

The Pulse Digital frame's personal email allows anyone to send photos anytime from any computer and mobile phone as well as through the Share feature on Kodak M series digital cameras. Best Buy, Future Shop, Black's, The Source, Henry's, Sears and Kodak.ca.



4

5 GRACO \$59.99

Help baby sleep with Sweet Slumber sound machine that creates sounds from a library of 12 soothing selections featuring white noise, nature sounds and lullabies, or share favourite songs with the MP3 plug-in port. Babies R Us



5

6 SHARPER IMAGE \$189.99

Sharper Image Bluetooth Sound System with iPod Dock and FM Radio allows you to play your MP3/iPod without the need to dock your device. The built in 2.0 digital amplifier creates outstanding sound quality. The Bay



6

7 XBOX \$69.99

Operating from as far away as 30 feet and offering up to eight hours of battery life, the Xbox 360 Wireless Headset eliminates another pesky cable. WalMart, Best Buy, Future Shop



7

8 D-LINK \$199.99

The Boxee Box wireless HD media player provides access to favourite Internet content right on HDTV. Instead of a keyboard, the Boxee Box comes with a two-sided RF remote control with a full QWERTY keypad. Best Buy



8

9 TOSHIBA \$419.99

The CV100C dual television and DVD player is a great holiday gift. The unit is \$369.99 for the 19 inch model, \$419.99 for the 22inch and \$519 for the 26 inch. Future Shop, Best Buy



9

ALWAYS THE
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Impress with wrapping

► **Make your loved ones feel special with a beautifully papered present this holiday season**

One of the most special parts of the holiday season is the giving and receiving of gifts. A perfectly wrapped present not only adds to that excitement, but it shows friends and family how important they are to you. That is why trend guru Lynn Spence is encouraging all Canadians to consider wrapping their presents this holiday season, rather than using a gift bag.

"People underestimate the value of wrapping gifts," says Spence, style expert and frequent guest on CityTV's CityLine. "Giving someone a wrapped gift shows them you care, and nothing can replace the exhilaration of imagining

"People underestimate the value of wrapping gifts."

LYNN SPENCE

what's inside, and the joy created when the gift is unwrapped and discovered."

"I really believe in making it more personal, after all you took the time to choose the gift, why not spend a little time making it stand out?" adds Spence.

For example, use an inexpensive reproduction map to cover a gift for the seasoned traveller. Top a gift with a photograph as a way to share a favourite memory or to provide a hint of the gift inside.

"Don't be afraid to use your imagination and be creative," suggests Spence.

Remember, you don't have to wrap gifts alone. Invite your friends over for a night of cocktails, appetizers and fun and wrap your gifts together.

NEWS CANADA



► Show you care by taking the time to perfectly wrap your presents.

Wrap it up in style

CityTV's CityLine style expert Lynn Spence relies on the latest style trends to draw her inspiration for creating the perfectly wrapped gift.

"This season's foremost trend is an uncompromised return to the classics," says Spence.

"Expect to see choices

ranging from nostalgic papers, eco-friendly papers and menswear inspired wrappings in matte shades of grey, camel and navy."

See below for some of her ideas on how to make your presents chic this holiday season.

Mix it Up

Move away from the traditional wrapping paper by incorporating new tex-

tures such as rice, foil and matte papers into your wrapping repertoire this year.

Mixed colours and patterns are also a great way to add visual interest to your presents.

Experiment with a pliable, fabulous oversized printed wallpaper tied with a paisley ribbon for a fun, unexpected look.

Go Glam

Add luxury to your packages with glamorous materials such as metallic papers that will make anyone feel spoiled.

Fashion inspired animal print or sophisticated quilted paper will look luxurious under the tree.

Add a satin, taffeta or velvet ribbon or pearls and crystals to add holiday luxe to your gifts.

Au Natural

For a more organic eco look, use recycled papers or materials such as linen, Kraft paper, fabric remnants, burlap or a fabulous vintage scarf to wrap gifts.

Make It Last

The joy of giving is always in style but

before you start wrapping gifts, Lynn offers one final piece of advice.

"Make sure to use a quality tape to ensure your packages stay sealed and look great. You can be sure that no one is peeking into that gorgeous gift before the special day arrives."

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Turn boring into great gifts

Some gifts can seem last-minute and impersonal even if they're actually quite lovely and usable.

You probably reach for those black cashmere gloves or light up the vanilla-scented candle far more often than you wear the funky neck-lace or beaded top that were under the Christmas tree last year.

But still, it's hard to get jazzed up about gloves, right?

Well, here's some advice on turning a potentially boring gift into a great one.

SCARVES AND GLOVES

Bendel's Bucciarelli thinks a leopard-print scarf is fail-safe. It's ageless and goes with almost any coat, yet it always updates your look, he says. "My 16-year-old daughter and my 80-year-

old mother each want one."

Nina Garcia, Marie Claire fashion director and Target style consultant, says women can never have too many lace scarves. They can transform any outfit into something romantic.

She, however, is hoping Santa Claus has fur-trimmed gloves with her name on them. "Everyone has gloves, but not everyone has fur-trimmed gloves," she says.

Cashmere is Macy's Lee's top choice, again because they're a bit of an indulgence, yet

available at many price points. But Gifts.com adviser

Dana Holmes says the gloves people really need this holiday season are the ones that are convertible to fingerless ones – or even just arm-warmers, those extra, hand-free sleeves that are the close cousin to the leg-warmers of the '80s. It's the way people can stay warm and play with the new gadget that was also under the tree.

SWEATER

A sense of the wearer's personal style is a must for a sweater, says Holmes, but whether the recipient is tailored or trendy, frumpy is never an option.

A cardigan is usually a safer bet for women than crew-neck or turtle-neck because it is easier to adapt "as your own," she says. The

current "it" version is a flowy, open-wrap style.

TIE

Women don't always love other people buying their clothes because they need items to fit into their existing wardrobes, says Holmes, but that's not typically the case for men.

For a hipster, you might try introducing him to a bow tie, says trend and retail analyst Tom Julian.

Any age man can wear one with the right attitude, he says, but it's the younger man who can really rock it. In more traditional ties, a 7.5-centimetre width is the norm and a five-centimetre tie is trendy.

"I think a tie is a great gift to give a man and this is the perfect season to do so," says Julian, author of Nordstrom Guide to Men's Everyday Dressing.

FRAGRANCE

For the friend who loves a particular designer but is watching his or her budget, a designer fragrance can be a really special gift, says Rochelle Bloom, president of the Fragrance Foundation, an industry trade group.

"If you can't afford the

whole outfit, this is a way to get their fashion vibe. Designers are really involved with fragrances, especially a Marc Jacobs or Donna Karan type," says Bloom.

Also, fragrance is the perfect way to enjoy a scent in a form that lasts longer. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**





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Dreaming of a green Christmas

Seasonal shopping for the eco-conscious has never been brighter. Here are a few fun gift ideas for the greens in your life.

Slow shopping: Instead of purchasing a gift, bestow your loved ones with a unique experience. Send a card with the promise of a finely crafted, home-cooked meal, fine wines and gather-

ing with friends. Use local ingredients where possible and savour an evening with conversation and good friends.

Green goods and gifts: From a recycling bin to a rain barrel, you can find any number of useful receptacles to fill with eco items for the holidays. Start with local wine and beer produced by

our independent craft wineries and breweries, add some local cheeses, home-made crackers and a bamboo cutting board, and you've got a do-it-yourself wine/beer and cheese party.

Conscious cards: Forgo the paper greeting cards and redirect funds into a worthwhile charitable option. Send an electronic

message to let your loved ones know you've made a donation instead of mailing a holiday greeting card. If you really need to send out that family picture and newsletter, recycle old holiday cards, purchase environmentally-friendly paper or craft your own paper from a kit.

NEWS CANADA

ISTOCK PHOTO



► Find out how to keep your body in good working order while you brave the Christmas rush.

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Healthy holiday shopping

- Find ways to stay fit, keep moving during your Christmas adventures
- Most of all, take your time

The holidays are typically a hectic time loaded with events and activities from potlucks and cocktail events to office parties and family gatherings.

It's easy to indulge in a few extra treats during the festive season, and often harder to maintain regular habits to keep bodies in check — like healthy eating and exercise.

The Ontario Kinesiology Association says individuals can still find ways to stay fit and keep moving amid the seasonal hustle and bustle.

Here are some of the association's tips for healthy holiday shopping.

Dress for comfort

Wear comfortable clothes that allow you to move easily so you can increase your stride and heart rate.

Consider shoes that have proper treads to reduce the risk of slipping on ice or wet floors and allow you to walk faster and more comfortably.

What to carry

Try to carry smaller bags; the weight of your purchases can add up quickly.

And try to carry bags on

both sides to maintain balance.

Awkward, one-sided carrying can result in a sore back or a slip and fall.

Pack your patience

Have patience waiting for parking spaces or in long lines. Be sure to take a parking spot farther from your destination and walk the extra distance.

And while waiting in line-ups, practise posture exercises for your stomach, back and bottom muscles.

Share the load

If you are shopping with company, share the loads.

Help your shopping mate and they can help you.

Plan your experience

Know where you want to go and buy the heaviest and the most awkward gifts last.

You should consider getting a locker or taking your packages back to the trunk of your car regularly as a way to increase your exercise and reduce your carrying load.

And most of all, be sure you don't forget to plan breaks and lunch times.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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2

Kerastase Chronologiste Treatment, \$75

Along with giving her gorgeously shiny hair, the service includes a killer, 30-minute melt-into-a-puddle head massage. 1-866-kerastase for salons



3

Bobbi Brown Modern Classic Palette, \$85

Beauty indulgences such as an easy-use makeup kit of pretty eye shadow and lip colour are always welcome. Thank you. Very much. Holt Renfrew



4

Aromachology Custom Candle Collection \$50

Bathtime is sacred, especially when there's a lock on the family bathroom door. Aromatherapeutic candles to suit the mood sweeten the experience. myaromachology.com



5

Airplus Spa Footies, \$5.97

A little footsie TLC can go a long way. Infused with aloe and vitamin E, cosy Airplus Spa Footies serve as a soft, loving cuddle for tired soles. Wal-Mart, Zellers



6

Tom Ford Private Blend Lipstick \$52

A divinely chic lipstick is a makeup must-have, a bit of fabulous for her purse that makes her think of you every time she uses it. Holt Renfrew

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More ideas

Start a collection

This is one of the easiest ways to carry on traditions from one year to the next. Find a unique "col-

lectible," and add to it each year.

Give to others

It's perhaps one of the best ways to celebrate the holidays.

Sandler

suggests

"spreading the love" by volunteering with members of your family at a food drive or a homeless shelter, helping other enjoy the holidays.

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Creating traditions

Do things your family will remember for years

The holidays are the perfect time to take a breather – yes, that's right. Take a few minutes and think about what means the most to you and your family. You probably will find that the things that are the most meaningful are the memories you've shared through the years. Often the gifts are soon forgotten, but decorating the tree with your kids' handmade decorations every year or serving a special eggnog recipe in your grandmother's silver punch bowl will usually be the rituals that you treasure.

"What is so awesome about family traditions is that they can be whatever you want them to be," says Sandy Sandler, founder of Crafters 4 Kids.

Here are a few ideas for creating great holiday traditions to incorporate into your own family's holiday celebrations.

Create a written record

"Have everyone write something down before

dinner that they are thankful for and read it before starting dinner," Sandler suggests.

Giving everyone time to think about this and actually write it down makes it more meaningful and makes people feel more at ease than they would be if they had to think of things on the spur of the moment.

Keep these notes and bring them out on different occasions. It's amazing to see how everyone's lives evolve from year to year.

Do it for the kids

When you create holi-

day traditions for the youngest members of your family, you will be installing memories in them for years to come. A favourite tradition could be started with close family friends who gather together all the neighbourhood kids for a special party during December. Each child could sign their name in "Santa's Big Book" and write down what they want Santa to bring that year.

Then "magically" Santa can appear, take each child on his knee and read aloud what the child had written.

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A guy's guide to gifting

► Tried and tested tips terrified male shopper

It's a well known fact: Most men hate holiday shopping.

The staff and readers at RedFlagDeals.com, Canada's largest shopping information and bargain hunting website, have put together a list of tips that will help men everywhere stay sane during the craziest shopping time of the year.

Plan Your Attack

When shopping, make like a ninja — get in and out before anyone knows you are even there. If you must go to the mall, prepare in advance. You should know what you're looking for, how much it costs, and where to get it before you leave the comfort of your home. When shopping online, shipping times will vary, so expect orders to take at least a week or two to arrive.

Tune Out

Bring your MP3 player with you when you go shopping. Your music may not be festive,



► Want your gift to impress sans stress? Trust in trends and go with your gut.

but at least it won't drive you crazy.

Shop Online

They have shopping on the Internet now? The third tip is the most obvious: shop online. You'll save money, avoid the crowds,

and find multiple gift ideas with the click of a button. Browse your favourite stores online. You'll save a lot of time by comparing price, availability, and reviews of products on the Internet.

NEWS CANADA

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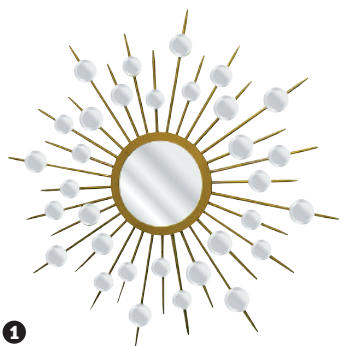
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Barker will pull double duty for Double Blue

Jim Barker officially added the GM duties to his job title yesterday when the Toronto Argonauts announced they wouldn't be offering Adam Rita, its GM and vice-president of football operations, a new contract after his current deal expires Jan. 1.

The move makes Barker the first Argos executive to assume both head coach and GM positions since Michael Clemons did in 2003. He joins CFL veterans Wally Buono of the B.C. Lions and John Hufnagel of the Calgary Stampeders as the only league officials to hold down the two posts.

Barker said he's prepared to handle the two jobs simultaneously because he has experience doing both. A longtime CFL head coach and assistant, Barker also served as Calgary's GM from 2005-07 before being named its senior vice-president of football operations and player-personnel director in 2008. Barker left the Stampeders to rejoin the Argos — he served as Toronto's head coach in 1999 — in February.

"I've spent over 30 years on the sidelines becoming as good a coach as I can be, and spent five years being immersed in being a GM and in the business side of it, and I think that's important," he said.

Barker's promotion wasn't surprising. There had been talk since Barker joined the Argos in the off-season that Rita's days with the club were numbered.

But Barker, who left a front-office job with the Stampeders to coach in Toronto, said his desire was always to return to coaching. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**



► Dion Phaneuf celebrates his goal with Phil Kessel against the Oilers Tuesday night.

Family first for Phaneuf

► Leafs captain misses practice to attend grandmother's funeral ► 'He was a guy who never wanted to leave. He wanted to stay here,' says Flames' Olli Jokinen

How Dion Phaneuf will feel about wearing a Maple Leaf jersey in Calgary is a mystery.

The Maple Leafs practised at the Scotiabank Saddledome yesterday without their captain. He had flown to Prince Edward Island for the funeral of his grandmother, Roma, who died Saturday at the age of 83.

Head coach Ron Wilson said Phaneuf would return to Calgary last night.

Once the future of the Flames' blue-line, Phaneuf will play his first game in Calgary tonight since he was dealt to Toronto on

40 Phaneuf scored his first goal of the season against the Oilers Tuesday. He has three goals and 13 assists in his 40 games as Leaf. He is minus-5 so far this season.

Jan. 31 in a multi-player deal.

Leafs forward Kris Versteeg provided some levity at practice by wearing a Phaneuf mask on his face during warmup. He mimicked Phaneuf's warmup routine and shooting style.

"Hopefully, when he sees it, he laughs," Ver-

steeg said.

Phaneuf's reception at the Saddledome will likely be mixed. He didn't ask for a trade and showed rare genuine emotion when he was dealt. Phaneuf generated offence from the back end, delivered highlight-reel hits and gave the club star power.

But Phaneuf's defensive lapses, which could be forgiven earlier in his career, became more glaring and frustrating his fourth season in the league.

That, combined with a drop-off in his offensive production, made him a polarizing figure for

Flames fans.

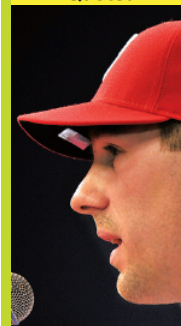
"I know there are probably people here that loved him and probably people at the other end of the spectrum," Flames defenceman Cory Sarich said. "What I found most of the time with Dion, it was one or the other as to people's opinions."

The formative years of Phaneuf's career were heavily influenced by Flames general manager Darryl Sutter and head coach Brent Sutter. Brent coached Phaneuf for four years with the Western Hockey League's Red Deer Rebels. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

4

sports

Quoted



"It's plenty of money. When you hit a certain point, enough's enough. It's just a matter of where you're comfortable, where you're happy, where your family's the most comfortable, what team gives you the best chance to win."

CLIFF LEE, ON WHY HE SIGNED WITH THE PHILLIES DESPITE OTHER TEAMS OFFERING HIM MORE MONEY.

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NFL playoff spots still up in the air

Five division leaders can clinch playoff berths this weekend, and the Patriots and Steelers can secure first-round byes in the AFC.

Pittsburgh and Jacksonville in the AFC and Atlanta, Chicago and the New York Giants in the NFC all are in position to earn post-season spots. The Jaguars simply have to win at Indianapolis to take the AFC South.

New England wins the AFC East and earns a bye if it wins at home against Green Bay and the Jets lose at Pittsburgh. The Patriots were the first team to clinch a playoff berth last week.

The Steelers get the AFC North crown with a win and a Baltimore loss, and also can grab a bye if the Steelers have the strength of victory tiebreaker over the Ravens and Jaguars after this weekend's games.

If Chicago wins Monday night at Minnesota and Green Bay loses, the Bears take the NFC North.

Atlanta, which leads the NFC South by one game over New Orleans, makes the playoffs with a victory or a tie at Seattle. The Falcons get in even if they lose if the Giants fall to Philadelphia or tie, or the Bears lose or tie, or Green Bay loses or ties.

For the Giants to qualify, they must beat the Eagles

at the Meadowlands — the teams currently are tied atop the NFC East at 9-4 — and have Chicago, Green Bay and Tampa Bay (home for Detroit) all lose, plus clinch the strength of victory component over the Buccaneers.

Three division runners-up also have shots at securing playoff berths this weekend.

The Saints do it with a win and losses or ties by the Giants and Bucs, or by the Bears and Bucs, or by the Packers and Bucs. They also get in with a tie and losses by the Bucs and Packers, or a tie and losses by the Bucs, Bears and Giants.

Baltimore needs to win and have the Colts and Chargers (at home against San Francisco) lose or tie, or win and see the Colts and Dolphins (home for Buffalo) lose or tie while the Chiefs (at St. Louis) lose. A tie does it for the Ravens if Miami, San Diego and Indianapolis all lose.

As for the Jets, a victory at Pittsburgh combined with a loss or tie by the Dolphins and Colts and a loss by the Chiefs get them into the post-season. They also qualify with a win and losses or ties by the Dolphins, Colts and Chargers, or with a tie and losses by Miami, Indianapolis and San Diego.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Size matters at world juniors

- ▶ Team Canada picks big bodies to stack up against Russia, U.S.
- ▶ 'We'll go after teams with our size and work really hard,' says head scout

Canada's world junior hockey team may not include any big names but it certainly has some big players.

Coach Dave Cameron and the Hockey Canada staff named their 22-man squad yesterday and it features plenty of beef up front and on defence. Five of the seven defencemen and seven of the 13 forwards are six foot two or bigger. That's not counting winger Marcus Foligno, who is listed at six foot one and a half.

"You don't realize it until you stand beside them, but this is a big team," said Kevin Prendergast, the former Edmonton Oilers executive who is now head scout for Canada's national teams. "We're going to need it."

"The Americans are going to be huge and the Russians will be strong. That's why we (also) went with the older guys."

Cameron and his staff were up past midnight making decisions on which final nine players to cut from a three-day selection camp. The result was a team short on players with star power, like Taylor Hall last year or John Tavares the year prior, but one that they hope can score goals as well as play a hard-working, physical game at the world under-20 championship that begins Dec. 26 in Buffalo.

Canada opens the tournament with a Boxing Day clash against Russia.

Forward Brayden

Schenn, one of four players returning from last year's silver-medallist team, said being dubbed blue collar doesn't mean they sacrifice skill or the ability to score goals.

"It reminds me of a team I played on in the under-18 (world championship) with (Jordan) Eberle," said Schenn. "We went to Russia and they said we didn't have much skill or fire-power and we

event."

Schenn and defenceman Ryan Ellis, who is back for a third straight world junior tournament, are likely the leading candidates to be named captain after the team shifts its base to Niagara Falls tomorrow.

Both

were in central positions in the front row as the team photo was taken. Cameron said it hinted that the four returning players, including defencemen Jared Cowen and Calvin de Haan, would have letters on their jerseys.

Ellis of the Windsor Spitfires, and Tyson Barrie of the Kelowna Rockets are the only players under six foot two on a defence.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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► Team Canada teammates Brayden Schenn, left, and Ryan Ellis.



"I'm happy it worked out. It would have been a huge disappointment if I didn't make the team."

LOUIS LEBLANC

NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Coach's sideline trip premeditated?

The New York Jets suspended assistant coach Sal Alosi indefinitely yesterday after he acknowledged he ordered five inactive players to form a wall along the sideline for a punt return, during which he tripped a Miami Dolphins player.

General manager Mike Tannenbaum said yesterday that Alosi, the team's strength and conditioning coach, did not initially volunteer during the investigation Monday that he told players to stand that way.

"As we continued our investigation, we discovered some new information," Tannenbaum said in a conference call from the NFL owners meetings in Dallas, "and the players at the Miami game were instructed by Sal to stand where they were to force the gun-

ner in the game to run around them."

Tight end Jeff Cumberland, who was inactive Sunday, said it was nothing new for the players to line up next to each other as they did against the Dolphins.

"Since the beginning of the year, we've been instructed to line up behind the (white) line," he said, adding that it was only Alosi who has told them to do so.

Coach Rex Ryan and special-teams co-ordinator Mike Westhoff both have denied they ordered anyone to do what Alosi told the players.

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NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Philadelphia	33	21	7	2	3	113	81	47	11-5-0-2	10-2-2-1	6-1-0-3	W4
d-Washington	33	18	11	2	2	99	94	40	12-4-1-2	6-7-1-0	3-5-1-1	L7
d-Montreal	31	18	11	2	0	81	66	38	11-5-2-0	7-6-0-0	5-4-1-0	L3
Pittsburgh	33	21	10	2	0	104	78	44	10-6-1-0	11-4-1-0	8-2-0-0	L2
NY Rangers	33	19	13	1	0	100	84	39	7-8-1-0	12-5-0-0	7-3-0-0	W2
Atlanta	31	17	11	1	2	99	91	37	9-6-0-1	8-5-1-1	8-2-0-0	W2
Boston	29	16	9	1	3	83	59	36	7-5-1-2	9-4-0-1	5-3-1-1	L2
Tampa Bay	30	16	10	2	2	94	106	36	7-2-1-1	9-8-1-1	6-2-0-2	W1
Carolina	29	13	12	0	4	82	90	30	6-5-0-1	7-7-0-3	3-3-0-4	W2
Buffalo	31	13	14	4	0	81	86	30	7-9-1-0	6-5-3-0	5-4-1-0	W1
Ottawa	32	13	16	2	1	71	96	29	8-8-1-1	5-8-1-0	3-5-1-1	L3
Toronto	30	12	14	2	2	69	87	28	8-6-2-1	4-8-0-1	4-5-1-0	W2
Florida	29	13	16	0	0	74	76	26	6-6-0-0	7-10-0-0	3-7-0-0	L2
New Jersey	30	9	19	1	1	56	88	20	5-7-1-1	4-12-0-0	4-6-0-0	W1
NY Islanders	28	5	18	3	2	59	98	15	3-7-1-1	2-11-2-1	1-7-2-0	L6

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Detroit	29	19	7	2	1	96	78	41	11-4-1-1	8-3-1-0	6-3-1-0	L1
d-Dallas	30	18	10	0	2	86	82	38	11-3-1-0	7-7-0-1	7-2-0-1	W1
d-Vancouver	28	16	8	2	2	91	74	36	9-3-1-1	7-5-1-1	6-3-1-0	W1
Anaheim	34	17	13	2	2	89	99	38	11-6-0-1	6-7-2-1	7-2-0-1	W3
Nashville	29	15	8	4	2	76	70	36	7-1-3-2	8-7-1-0	6-1-3-2	W3
Colorado	30	16	10	4	0	108	95	36	9-4-1-0	8-6-3-0	4-3-3-0	W3
Los Angeles	28	17	10	1	0	78	65	35	11-2-1-0	6-6-0-0	5-4-1-0	W1
San Jose	30	15	10	4	1	90	87	35	8-4-2-1	7-6-2-0	5-4-0-1	L1
Chicago	32	16	13	2	1	101	96	35	8-8-0-0	8-5-2-1	6-3-1-0	L2
Columbus	29	16	11	1	1	76	79	34	8-7-0-1	8-4-1-0	3-5-1-1	L1
Phoenix	29	14	9	4	2	81	80	34	6-4-2-2	8-5-2-0	5-4-0-1	L1
St. Louis	28	14	9	2	3	72	75	33	9-2-0-2	5-7-2-1	4-4-1-1	L1
Minnesota	29	13	12	1	3	71	86	30	7-6-0-2	6-6-1-1	4-4-1-1	L1
Calgary	31	13	15	1	2	84	19	29	8-6-0-0	5-9-1-2	5-4-0-1	W1
Edmonton	30	11	14	1	4	78	105	27	5-8-1-1	6-6-1-2	6-3-0-1	L2

d — division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SL (shootout loss) column.

Last night's results

Buffalo 3 Boston 2
New Jersey 3 Phoenix 0
N.Y. Rangers 4 Pittsburgh 0
Anaheim 2 Washington 1 (OT)
Detroit 5 St. Louis 2
Philadelphia 5 Montreal 3
Atlanta at Tampa Bay
Carolina 4 Florida 3
San Jose at Nashville
Colorado at Chicago
Columbus at Vancouver
Tuesday's results

Toronto 4 Edmonton 1
Philadelphia 3 Pittsburgh 2
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Anaheim at N.Y. Islanders, 7 p.m.
Phoenix at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
Boston at Montreal, 7:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Ottawa at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
San Jose at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Toronto at Calgary, 9:30 p.m.
Columbus at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

LATE TUESDAY

LEAFS 4, OILERS 1

First Period

1. Toronto, Phaneuf 1 (Kessel, Armstrong)
5:55

2. Edmonton, Eberle 7 (Gagner, Whitney)
11:45

Penalty — Armstrong Tor (roughing) 2:01.

Second Period

3. Toronto, Grabovski 9 (MacArthur, Lebda)
8:28 (pp)

4. Toronto, Versteeg 10 (Schnell, Brent) 17:38
Penalties — Brule Edm (elbowing) 2:42, Stortini Edm (kneeing) 6:38, Orr Tor, Stortini Edm (fighting) 12:19, MacIntyre Edm (roughing) 12:29, Edmonton bench (too many men; served by Brule) 14:40.

Third Period

5. Toronto, Kessel 12 (Versteeg, Bozak) 9:47 (pp)

Penalties — Phaneuf Tor (unsportsmanlike conduct) 6:16, Pajariar Edm (holding) 8:49, Orr Tor, MacIntyre Edm (misconduct) 11:35, Versteeg Tor (elbowing) 15:36, Toronto bench (too many men; served by Kessel) 19:30.

Shots

Toronto 12 13 9 34
Edmonton 12 3 9 24
Goal — Toronto: Giguere (W-8-6-2); Edmonton: Khabibulin (L-7-11-2). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Toronto: 2-5; Edmonton: 0-4. **Att.** — 16,839 (16,839) at Edmonton.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	PT
Crosby, Pgh	26	27	53
Stamkos, TB	24	20	44
St. Louis, TB	11	26	37

Not including last night's games

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Boston	19	4	.826	—
d-Miami	18	8	.692	2½
d-Chicago	16	8	.667	3½
New York	16	9	.640	4
Orlando	16	9	.640	4
Atlanta	16	10	.615	4½
Indiana	11	13	.458	8½
Milwaukee	10	13	.435	9
Philadelphia	10	15	.400	10
Charlotte	9	15	.375	10½
Toronto	9	17	.346	11½
Detroit	8	18	.308	12½
Cleveland	7	17	.292	12½
Washington	6	17	.261	13
New Jersey	6	19	.240	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	20	3	.870	—
Dallas	19	5	.792	1½
d-L.A. Lakers	19	7	.731	2½
d-Utah	18	8	.692	3½
Oklahoma City	17	8	.680	4
Denver	15	9	.625	5½
New Orleans	14	10	.583	6½
Portland	12	13	.480	9
Phoenix	11	12	.478	9
Memphis	11	14	.440	10
Houston	10	14	.417	10½
Golden State	9	16	.360	12
Minnesota	6	19	.240	14½
Sacramento	5	17	.227	14½
L.A. Clippers	5	21	.192	16½

Last night's results

L.A. Lakers 109 Indiana 94
Boston 118 New York 116
Philadelphia 105 L.A. Clippers 91
Chicago 110 Toronto 93
Cleveland at Memphis
Charlotte at Memphis
Sacramento at New Orleans
Houston at Oklahoma City
Milwaukee at San Antonio
Minnesota at Phoenix
Portland at Dallas

Tuesday's results

Charlotte 97 Toronto 91
Philadelphia 82 New Jersey 77
L.A. Lakers 103 Washington 89
Detroit 103 Atlanta 80
Houston 118 Sacramento 105
Denver 111 Orlando 94
Golden State 108 Minnesota 99
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Washington at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Atlanta at Boston, 8 p.m.
San Antonio at Denver, 10:30 p.m.

BULLS 110, RAPTORS 93

Chicago (110)
Deng 7-14 2-2 19, Boozer 13-17 8-11 34, Noah 4-6 3-4 11, Rose 3-9 0-0 6, Bogans 2-1-2 6, Brewer 4-6 2-2 10, Gibson 3-11 0-0 6, Korver 5-11 0-1 13, Watson 1-4 1-2 3, Asik 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 43-81 17-24 110.

TORONTO (93)

Weems 3-10 1-2 7, Davis 5-9 0-0 10, A.Johnson 1-6 0-0 2, Bayless 9-15 2-3 20, DeRozan 4-12 4-4 12, Dorsey 5-8 2-2 12, Kleiza 2-9 0-0 4, Barbosa 7-13 5-5 21, Wright 2-4 0-0 5. Totals 38-86 14-16 93.
Chicago 23 40 28 19 110
Toronto 18 26 20 29 93
3-Point Goals—Chicago 7-18 (Deng 3-6, Korver 3-7, Bogans 1-1, Watson 0-1, Gibson 0-1, Rose 0-2), Toronto 3-12 (Barbosa 2-3, Wright 1-1, Weems 0-2, Bayless 0-3, Kleiza 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Chicago 55 (Boozer 12), Toronto 40 (Dorsey 13). Assists—Chicago 28 (Rose 11), Toronto 19 (Weems 5). Total Fouls—Chicago 15, Toronto 20. Technicals—Gibson, Chicago defensive three second, Toronto defensive three second. A—17,750 (19,800) at Toronto.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE

KANSAS CITY ROYALS—Designated RHP Philip Humber for assignment.

NEW YORK YANKEES—Agreed to terms with RHP Mark Prior, RHP Brian Anderson, INF Doug Bernier, RHP Buddy Carlyle, LHP Neal Cotts, C Gustavo Molina and LHP Andy Sisco on minor league contracts.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS—Promoted Carlos Gomez to director, international scouting. COLORADO ROCKIES—Agreed to terms with INF Ty Wigginton on a two-year contract.

Named Marv Foley major league catching instructor; Duane Espy manager of Tulsa (Texas); Lenn Sakata hitting coach for Asheville (SAL) and Dave Burba pitching coach for Tri-City (NWL). Promoted Dave Schuler to pitching coach for Tulsa, Kevin Riggs to hitting coach for Modesto (Cal) and Joey Eischen to pitching coach for Asheville.

FLORIDA MARLINS—Agreed to terms with LHP Randy Choate on a two-year contract. HOUSTON ASTROS—Agreed to terms with INF Brian Dopirak and RHP Sammy Gervacio on minor league contracts.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES—Agreed to terms with LHP Cliff Lee on a five-year contract. PITTSBURGH PIRATES—Agreed to terms with LHP Donnie Veal on a minor league contract.

BASKETBALL

NBA

HOUSTON ROCKETS—Traded G Jermaine Taylor and cash considerations to Sacramento Kings for a conditional 2011 second-round draft pick.

NEW JERSEY NETS—Acquired G Sasha Vujacic and a 2011 first-round draft pick from the Los Angeles Lakers and a 2012 first-round draft pick from Houston in a three-team trade. The Nets sent F-C Joe Smith and two second-round draft picks to Los Angeles and G Terrence Williams to Houston.

FOOTBALL

NFL

NFL—Fined Jacksonville DB Will Middleton \$5,000 for a helmet-to-helmet hit on Oakland QB Jason Campbell during a Dec. 12 game. CAROLINA PANTHERS—Signed LB Thomas Williams to the practice squad.

CINCINNATI BENGALS—Signed CB Keiwan Ratliff.

CLEVELAND BROWNS—Signed OL Brannon Braxton to the practice squad.

DALLAS COWBOYS—Placed WR-KR Kevin Ogletree on injured reserve. Signed WR Manuel Johnson from the practice squad.

DETROIT LIONS—Placed OT Gosder Cherilus and CB Brandon McDonald on injured reserve. Activated LB Caleb Campbell from the practice squad. Signed WR Roy Hall to the practice squad.

HOUSTON TEXANS—Placed DE Mario Williams, WR David Anderson and G Mike Brisiel on injured reserve.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—Placed CB Jonathan Wilhite on injured reserve. Signed DL Louis Leonard.

NEW YORK GIANTS—Placed LB Clint Sintim on injured reserve. Signed DE Alex Hall.

Signed LB Kenny Ingram to the practice squad. Terminated the practice squad contract of DT Joe Joseph.

NEW YORK JETS—Extended season suspension of assistant coach Sal Aloisi to indefinite, after discovering he ordered five inactive players to form a wall along the sideline for a punt

return, during which he tripped a Miami Dolphins player during a Dec. 12 game. TENNESSEE TITANS—Placed DT Tony Brown on injured reserve. Signed C Kevin Matthews from the practice squad.

CFL

EDMONTON ESKIMOS—Named Rick Campbell assistant head coach and special teams coordinator, Rich Stubler defensive coordinator and Kit Lathrop defensive line coach. Announced defensive line coach Mike Walker will not return for the 2011 season.

HOCKEY

NHL

CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS—Recalled F Jeremy Morin from Rockford (AHL). COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS—Activated LW Kristian Huselius from the injured list. Placed C Derek MacKenzie on the injured list.

WASHINGTON CAPITALS—Recalled RW Andrew Gordon and C Jay Beagle from Hershey (AHL). Assigned D Brian Fahey to Hershey.

AHL

LEAGUE OFFICE—Suspended Wilkes-Barre/Scranton D Robert Bortuzzo and RW Jesse Boulerice and Norfolk LW Stefano Giliati each for one game as a result of their actions in a Dec. 11 game between the teams.

SAN ANTONIO RAMPAGE—Recalled T Tyler Mosienko from Las Vegas (ECHL).

ECHL

READING ROYALS—Announced F Ryan Crutcher has been returned to the team by Lake Erie (AHL).

VICTORIA SALMON KINGS—Signed F Tim Kraus.

HOCKEY

CANADA'S WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY ROSTER

Canada's team for the world junior hockey championship Dec. 26, 2010-Jan. 5, 2011 in Buffalo and Lewiston, N.Y. (with hometown, team and league):

Goalenders

Mark Visentin, Waterford, Ont. Niagara (OHL); Olivier Roy, Causapscal, Que., Acadie-Bathurst (QMJHL).

Defencemen

Jared Cowen, Allan, Sask., Spokane (WHL); Simon Despres, Laval, Que., Saint John (QMJHL); Dylan Olsen, Calgary, Minnesota-Duluth (NCAA); Erik Gudbranson, Orleans, Ont., Kingston (OHL); Ryan Ellis, Freeport, Ont., Windsor (OHL); Tyson Barrie, Victoria, Kelowna (OHL); Calvin de Haan, Carp, Ont., Oshawa (OHL).

Forwards

Sean Couturier, Bathurst, N.B., Drummondville (QMJHL); Jaden Schwartz, Emerald Park, Sask., Colorado College (NCAA); Zack Kassian, LaSalle, Ont., Windsor (OHL); Brayden Schenn, Saskatoon, Brandon (WHL); Casey Cizikas, Mississauga, Ont., Mississauga St. Michael's (OHL); Quinton Howden, Oak Bank, Man., Moose Jaw (WHL); Curtis Hamilton, Kelowna, B.C., Saskatoon (WHL); Marcus Foligno, Sudbury, Ont., Sudbury (OHL); Ryan Johansen, Port Moody, B.C., Portland (WHL); Louis Leblanc, Point-Claire, Que., Montreal (QMJHL); Cody Eakin, Winnipeg, Swift Current (WHL); Carter Ashton, Saskatoon, Tri-City (WHL); Brett Connolly, Port Hardy, B.C., Prince George (WHL).

Head Coach: Dave Cameron, Charlottetown, Mississauga St. Michael's (OHL).

Assistant Coaches: George Burnett, Port Perry, Ont., Belleville (OHL); Andre Tourigny, Nicolet, Que., Rouyn-Noranda Huskies (QMJHL); Ryan Huska, Cranbrook, B.C., Kelowna Rockets (WHL).

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	11	2	0	.846	415	276
N.Y. Jets	9	4	0	.692	273	242
Miami	7	6	0	.538	225	244
Buffalo	3	10	0	.231	256	339

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	8	5	0	.615	295	331
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	347	318
Houston	5	8	0	.385	316	355
Tennessee	5	8	0	.385	291	265

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	290	198
Baltimore	9	4	0	.692	294	229
Cleveland	5	8	0	.385	235	252
Cincinnati	2	11	0	.154	262	345

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct
--	---	---	---	-----

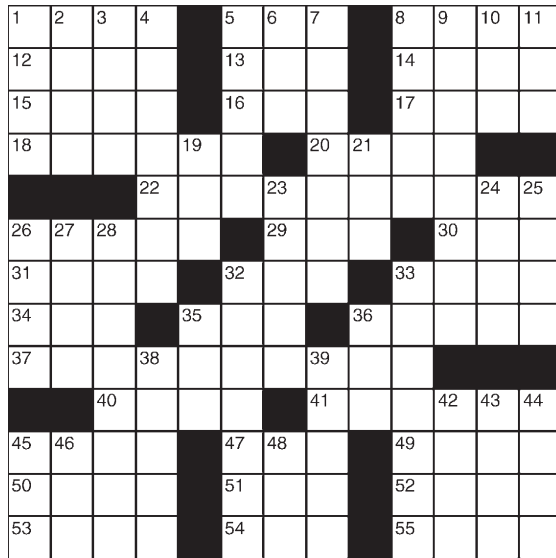
Crossword

Across

- 1 Makes a decision
5 Blond shade
8 Old fogey
12 Tree anchor
13 — out a living
14 Grand story
15 Chimney channel
16 Sermon subject
17 Small change
18 Precede
20 New Look designer
22 Documented evidence, maybe
26 Lays an egg
29 Insult
30 Attempt
31 Queue
32 Snapshots, familiarly
33 Active one
34 Check-casher's pair
35 Morsel
36 Handbag
37 1973 movie set at Harvard, with "The"
40 Apple computer
41 Orange or grapefruit
45 Land measure
47 Frequently
49 Small pie
50 No stay-at-home
51 Privy
52 Therefore
53 Vortex
54 "— the ramparts ..."
55 Profound

Down

- 1 "Carmina Burana"



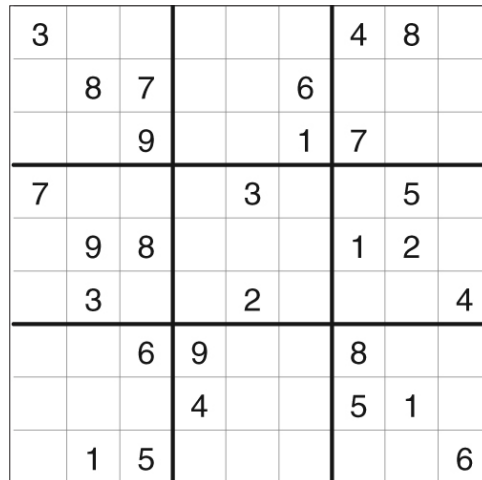
- composer
2 Game on horseback
3 Go sightseeing
4 Spire
5 Man of morals?
6 Schuss
7 Rocker Jimi
8 Interior designer's concern
9 One at the switchboard
10 Cacophony
11 Calendar abbr.
19 Petrol
21 "Monty Python" starter
23 Archie's wife
24 Enrages
25 Orpheus' instrument
26 Buy, remodel and sell
27 Verdi work
28 Brilliant
32 Flute's kid brother
33 Sang with someone
35 Support of a sort
36 Omega preceder
38 Abrasive powder
39 Thespian
42 Exceptional
43 Incite

- 44 Halt
45 Time of your life?
46 Food fish
48 Adversary

► Yesterday's answer



Sudoku



How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

► Yesterday's answer

5	4	9	7	2	8	3	1	6
3	7	1	5	9	6	2	8	4
8	6	2	1	3	4	7	5	9
1	5	3	9	4	2	6	7	8
4	9	7	6	8	5	1	3	2
6	2	8	3	1	7	4	9	5
7	8	5	2	6	3	9	4	1
9	3	6	4	5	1	8	2	7
2	1	4	8	7	9	5	6	3

Send a KISS

Show some love! Send a note to somebody special at kiss@metronews.ca

We had a marvelous anniversary, Francine, and I thank God you're in my life. I love you with all my heart and look forward to many, many years of helping your partner and helpmate. LOVE YOUR OLE WILL.

Tati and Jodi Podi, You are both my sunshine & make my hardships worthwhile. I love you forever and always MOMMY

Baby Bear thanks for never giving up on me. You are everything I have and need. You were the one since the beginning. I truly am lucky to have you. TE AMO, NANITA

You're amazing, Vivian. Please don't change because I wouldn't want to be with anyone else! U add meaning to my life. If you held up 11 roses, you would be looking at 12 of the most beautiful things in the world. LOVE ALWAYS, JEREMY

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20
Watch what you say and do today. Your words and actions may seem perfectly reasonable to you but some people are sensitive to being given advice, nevermind criticism.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21
Resist the urge to act on impulse today, especially if you are bored. If you act without thinking, the consequences could be unthinkable. Don't be rash — it's not worth the risk.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21
Sometimes you can be too emotional and sometimes you show no emotion. You will feel both extremes over the next 24 hours. Be careful your uneven feelings don't jeopardize an important relationship.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22
You take life's duties seriously, but sometimes you are too severe in your reactions and make it hard for people to know the real you — the fun you. What happens today is not important, don't look so glum.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug. 23
Today, it will be easy for you to reach out to the world and bend it to your will. But do you need to be so forceful? Probably not. You're pretty good at friendly persuasion, too.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24-Sept. 22
Why do you feel guilty about something that wasn't your fault? At the most, you played a minor role. Stop beating yourself up and next time be more cautious with whom you team up.

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23
Travel and social plans may change at the last moment today. Of course, you won't be happy about it. Fortunately, your schedule is flexible, so don't fume about it for too long. You'll still have a great time.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22
Make sure you know all the facts before making a financial decision. You may have too rosy a view of how much money will be coming. Don't plan on too much going out.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21
You're moving so fast that you think you're invincible. Mistake! There is an object ahead and if you don't take evasive action, there could be a crash. Slow down.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20
Common sense should tell you that what you are worrying about is not worth the effort. Even if the worst happens, it's not the end of the world. Stop worrying and start living.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18
Is it wrong to be happy when other people are sad? Of course not! You are not responsible for their emotions, so laugh as much as you like. They'll want to follow.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20
Keep things simple today. Your life is complicated enough without adding more to the mix. Focus on the one thing that really matters and put everything else out of your mind. SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

"And everybody was kung-fu fighting!"
JULIAN JAMILANO



WIN! You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image to the right and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.



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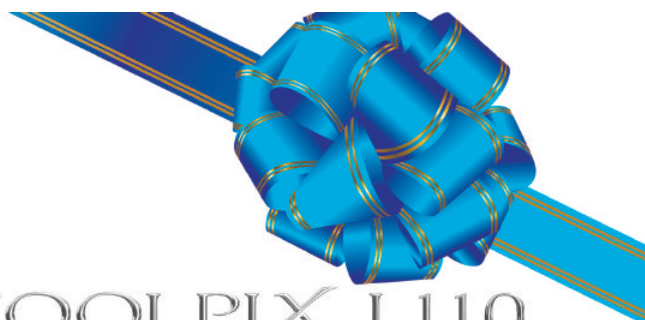
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